



**MAS 648 Family Systems: Applications in Ministry**  
**2 hours credit/ 3 units CEUs**

Instructor Name	Rev. Claudell Hefner County M.A.
Office Hours	1:00 to 3:00 p.m. daily; by appointment
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Required Texts	Friedman, Edwin. <i>Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church &amp; Synagogue</i> . New York: The Guilford Press. 1985. ISBN 0-89862-059-7
Other Required Reading	handouts and websites
Recommended Reading	-Boers, Arthur Paul. <i>Never call them jerks: Healthy responses to difficult behavior</i> . Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute. 1999. -Steinke, Peter. <i>Healthy congregations: A systems approach</i> . Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute. 1996. -Richardson, Ronald. <i>Creating a healthier church: Family systems theory, leadership, and congregational life</i> . Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1996. ISBN 0-8006-2955-8

**Course Description**

This class explores family systems theory applied to the church environment. Students will examine their own family system and relate their awareness to their past and current personal and organizational experiences. Students will use family systems theory to see the spiritual wholeness within the church and learn leadership skills to facilitate continued healing.

**Learning Objectives**

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

1. Apply family systems theory to case studies.
2. Identify and analyze systems operating in personal and organizational relationships.
3. Use family systems theory and vocabulary to interpret dysfunctional behaviors and take corrective action in the church setting.

The above learning objectives partially fulfill the following program outcomes for the Master of Divinity:

MD/C-1 Spiritual and Personal Development: Demonstrate a pattern of holistic growth in personal and spiritual consciousness

MD/C-3 Ministry Skills: Demonstrate essential skills for effective ministry, including the areas of worship ceremonies, education, leadership, administration and pastoral ministry.

**Selected Bibliography**

Boers, A. (1999) *Never call them jerks: Healthy responses to difficult behavior*. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute.

Friedman, E. (1990) Friedman's fables. New York: The Guildford Press.

Friedman, E. (1985) Generation to generation: Family process in church and synagogue. NY: The Guildford Press.

Gilbert, R. (1992) Extraordinary relationships: A new way of thinking about human interaction. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Kerr, M. (2005). One family's story: A primer on Bowen theory. Washington DC: Bowen Center for the Study of the Family. [www.thebowncenter.org](http://www.thebowncenter.org) ISBN 0-9658540-2-7

Richardson, R. (1996). Creating a healthier church: Family systems theory, leadership, and congregational life. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. ISBN 0-8006-2955-8

Steinke, P. (1993) How your church family works: Understanding congregations as emotional systems. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute. ISBN 1-56699-110-22

Steinke, P. (1996) Healthy congregations: A systems approach. Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute.

Williamson, R. (2004). Charting self: The beliefs chart as a tool for change. Lombard, IL: Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. [www.LMPeaceCenter.org](http://www.LMPeaceCenter.org)