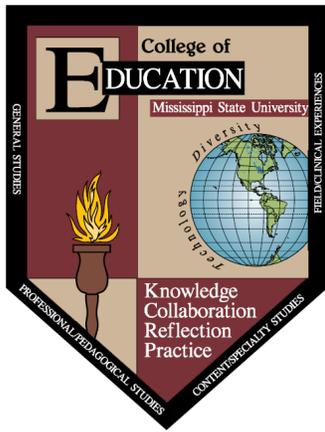


**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT of COUNSELING and EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
COURSE SYLLABUS**

Course Prefix & Number:	COE 8303
Course Title:	Family Counseling Theory
Credit Hours:	3 hours
Type of Course:	Lecture
Catalog Description:	Three hours lecture. (Prerequisite: COE 8023). Study of the theory and practice of family counseling.

College of Education Conceptual Framework:



The faculty in the College of Education at Mississippi State University are committed to assuring the success of students and graduates by providing superior learning opportunities that are continually improved as society, schools, and technology change. The organizing theme for the conceptual framework for the College of Education at Mississippi State University is educational professionals - dedicated to continual improvement of all students' educational experiences. The beliefs that guide program development are as follows:

1. **KNOWLEDGE** - Educational professionals must have a deep understanding of the organizing concepts, processes, and attitudes that comprise their chosen disciplinary knowledge base, the pedagogical knowledge base, and the pedagogical content knowledge base. They must also know how to complement these knowledge bases with the appropriate use of technology.
2. **COLLABORATION** - Educational professionals must continually seek opportunities to work together, learn from one another, forge partnerships, and assume positions of responsibility.
3. **REFLECTION** - Educational professionals must be willing to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection. They must also possess the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to learn, change, and grow as life-long learners.
4. **PRACTICE** - Educational professionals must have a rich repertoire of research-based strategies for instruction, assessment, and the use of technologies. They must be able to focus that array of skills on promoting authentic learning by all students or clients, while exhibiting an appreciation and commitment to the value and role of diversity.

Counseling Programs Mission Statement:

The mission of the counseling programs is the development of students who can practice in a variety of professional settings including K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, clinical mental health settings, college counseling centers, and rehabilitation counseling settings. The faculty is committed to preparing graduate students who have solid theoretical knowledge, appropriate clinical skills, and an understanding of the scientist-practitioner model of working with individuals. Graduates are expected to contribute substantially to the improvement of the lives of individuals in our changing, technologically complex, and increasingly diverse society and to promote and conduct research designed to improve and advance the counseling profession.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Student learning outcomes are specific to the 2009 CACREP domains for Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling and include the following:

Foundations and Contextual Dimensions

1. Students will gain an understanding of the history, philosophy, trends, roles of family counselors in a variety of settings, their relationship to other professionals, and preparation standards and credentials relevant to the practice of family counseling. CACREP MCFC A1, A3, A4; CFPO 3, 9
2. Students will know the major theoretical approaches to family counseling and demonstrate the ability to select models and techniques appropriate to families presenting problems. CACREP MCFC A5, B2; CFPO 3, 10, 11
3. Students will understand ethical and legal dilemmas in family counseling and know how to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in family counseling. CACREP MCFC A2, B1; CFPO 1, 8, 14
4. Students will understand the developmental phases of family life, family life cycle dynamics, and how these predict certain stressors/problems and opportunities for change. CACREP MCFC A6; CFPO 3, 5, 10

Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention

5. Students will understand issue of the family life cycle; healthy family functioning; family structures; and family of origin and inter-generational issues in a multicultural society. CACREP MCFC C1; CFPO 3, 11, 14,
6. Students will recognize specific problems that can impact family functioning, and know how to use a variety of preventative, developmental, and wellness approaches in working with families. CACREP MCFC C2, D1; CFPO 3, 4, 9, 10,11
7. Students will understand human sexuality and its impact on family and couple functioning. CACREP MCFC C3; CFPO 3

8. Students will understand professional issues relevant to the practice of family counseling including recognition, reimbursement, right to practice, confidentiality, legal responsibilities and liabilities of clinical practice and research, family law, and the business aspects of family counseling. CACREP MCFC C4, D5; CFPO 1, 2, 3, 14

9. Students will apply systems theory to conceptualize issues and treat families in therapy. CACREP MCFC D2, D3; CFPO 3, 4, 10, 11, 12

10. Students will recognize the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders. CACREP CMHC C8

11. Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize his or her own limitations as a clinical mental health counselor and to seek supervision or refer clients when appropriate. CACREP D9

Diversity and Advocacy

12. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how multiculturalism and diversity issues, including but not limited to race, culture, nationality, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and spiritual orientation, occupation, immigration status, and economic class impact families and family systems. CACREP MCFC E1, E2, E4; CFPO 2, 3, 6, 10, 14

13. Students will understand current literature that outlines theories, approaches, strategies and techniques shown to be effective in working with diverse family systems. CACREP MCFC E3; CFPO 2, 3, 6, 12, 14

14. Students will demonstrate skills in prevention, consultation, knowledge of resources and community networks, advocacy at the local, state, and national levels, and multicultural sensitivity that are responsive to the needs of diverse families. CACREP MCFC F1, F2, F3 ; CFPO 2, 3, 6, 9, 10,11

15. Students will understand the effect of local, state, and national policies, programs, and services on diverse family systems. CACREP MCFC E5; CFPO 3

16. Students will demonstrate the ability to modify counseling systems, theories, techniques, and interventions to make them culturally appropriate for diverse families. CACREP MCFC F4; CFPO 2, 6, 10, 12

17. Students will maintain information regarding community resources to make appropriate referrals. CACREP F1

18. Students will advocate for policies, programs, and services that are equitable and responsive to the unique needs of clients. CACREP F2.

Assessment

19. Students will know how to form a therapeutic relationship, select appropriate assessment models relevant the family's issues, engage families in therapy, utilize a variety of assessment tools, conduct systemic assessments, and identify factors that contribute to family disequilibrium. CACREP MCFC G1, G2, G3, H1, H2, H3; CFPO 2, 3, 4, 10, 11

20. Students will understand various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses, including diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments. CACREP G2

Research and Evaluation

21. Students will know how to evaluate, understand, and apply research relevant to the practice of family counseling. CACREP MCFC I1, J1, J3; CFPO 3,10, 13

Topics to Be Covered:

The history of family therapy

The family systems perspective and the language of family systems

Definition of a family/ healthy and unhealthy families/family resources and strengths

Roles/functions/ preparation standards/credentialing/professional organizations/identity

Ethical/ legal/ professional issues in family counseling

Professional and policy issues in the practice of family counseling

Family development/life cycle/ the eight lenses of family therapy

The sociology of the family/contemporary issues/problems/societal trends

The impact of local/state/national policies, programs, and services on family

Advocacy/diversity and multiculturalism in family counseling

Consultation/collaboration/networking/resource building in family counseling

Parenting issues/ treatment issues/human sexuality

Models of treatment (prevention, development, wellness, etc.) in family counseling

Assessment/diagnosis/treatment planning in family counseling

Research in family counseling

Theories and techniques of family counseling and therapy

- Multigenerational Family Therapy
- Adlerian Family Therapy
- Human Validation Process Model
- Symbolic-Experiential Family Therapy
- Structural Family Therapy
- Strategic Family Therapy
- Solution Focused and Solution Oriented Therapy
- Postmodernism, Social Construction, and Narratives
- Feminist Family Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy
- Systems integration

Required Text(s):

Bitter, J. (2012). *Theory and practice of family therapy and counseling*. California: Brooks/Cole
APA Manual, 6th Edition

Methods of Instruction:

This course will consist of lectures, discussions, videotapes, guest speakers, student interviews, and experiential learning activities.

Student Activities/Course Assignments:

1. Family Exploration Interview : This is an opportunity to learn about families by interviewing one. You will not be doing family therapy. You will simply be assuming the role of an interested friend/interviewer of a non-clinical family (i.e. a family that is not in therapy) as you learn about the rules, roles, and relationships -- the culture --of a non-help seeking family. You can choose a family of a friend of yours or ask a class member to suggest a family to you. Your choice in families may also be reflective of a variety of diverse types of family forms and structures (i.e. two-parent, single-parent, teen parent, blended/remarried, gay/lesbian, adoptive or foster family, ethnically/racially diverse or mixed families). You cannot choose your own family. Create a list of questions to ask the family members. Be sure to address issues of resiliency and strength in the family you choose, the stage of the family life cycle, family structure, cultural factors, the type of family-healthy/unhealthy family (why/why not?), intergenerational and other issues, current issues with which the family is struggling. After you interview the family, you will need to write up a 4-6 paged, double-spaced report which describes: (a) how you ended up selecting the family ;(b) the composition of family you interviewed (keep identities in confidence); (c) some highlights of the interview; (d) sample questions asked along with family's responses; (e) how this experience was for you (i.e. ideas, thoughts, reactions, etc.); (f) anything else that was relevant to your experience (e.g. how this might

relate to your development as a therapist or counselor, what was this experience like for the family). The report must be written utilizing APA style. CACREP MCFC A6, C1, E1, E2; Learning outcomes: 4, 5, 10. Due_____

2. Contemporary Family Issues /Family Theory Presentation: The class will be divided into ten different types of families (each representing a specific theoretical model). Your group will be assigned a specific family counseling theory approach, and a problem for which your classroom family may need therapeutic services (e.g., domestic violence, poverty, divorce, suicidal member, family member with a mental illness, substance abuse, disability, sexual abuse, parent in prison, illegal immigration, military families, sexual orientation, or the group's choice). You will create your family and the presenting concerns. You will: (a) conduct a presentation on your assigned theoretical approach and apply its concepts to solving your family's problem (s). Your presentation should cover key concepts/beliefs, an explanation of the family's problem from a systems perspective, therapy goals, therapist role and functions, techniques, multicultural evaluation, and contributions to multicultural counseling and gender issues; (b) discuss how your assigned family counseling approach conceptualizes the family's problem; (c) discuss how the theoretical tenets may be used in practice with the particular presenting problem of your family and any modifications you had to make to your theory for cultural and/or clinical relevance; (d) mention any ethical/legal considerations that may need to be addressed and how you will address these concerns; (e) include an activity that involves the class and illustrates/explains in greater detail, a particular concept/techniques of the approach; (f) discuss interventions that may be helpful to use with this family; (g) include four research articles that support the efficacy of your family therapy approach for addressing this particular issues; (h) include an advocacy initiative that you can develop for this family to address a particular need that is not being met. CACREP MCFC A5, B1, B2, C2, C3, D1 E2, E3, E5, F3, F4, I1, J1; Learning outcomes: 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16. Due____

3. Family-Cinema-therapy Clinical Case Presentation: You will be paired up into groups of two and required to watch one of the movies listed below which deals with a family in crisis. As family therapists, you will assess and evaluate the family from a systems perspective, and then develop a detailed treatment plan to address their issue (s). Your plan will include the following: (a) summary of the movie and why your group chose it; (b) background information on the family; (c) stage of the family cycle; (d) presenting concerns; (e) secondary issues; (e) assessment and diagnosis using the eight lenses of family therapy and any additional tools; (f) theoretical approach; (g) legal and ethical considerations; (h) multicultural/diversity issues; (i) helpful community resources; (j) advocacy initiatives; and (k) detailed treatment goals, techniques, and treatment evaluation as well as referral options as needed. You will present this formally to the rest of the class, and will be expected to use clips from the movie to illustrate/justify your diagnosis and treatment goals as well as the family systems theoretical approach you used. You will be provided with a sample treatment plan and opportunities to engage in assessment and treatment planning in class before the actual assignment is due. Some movies are as follows: The Family That Preys Together, Spanglish, On Golden Pond, When a Man loves a Woman, Precious, A River Runs Through It, Step-Mom, Ordinary

People, Namesake, Our Family Wedding, The Family Stone, Rachel is Getting Married, Little Miss Sunshine, American Beauty, Love Actually, Terms of Endearment, A Thousand Acres, Georgia Rules, The Kids Are Alright . If you have other choices please discuss them with the instructor so that they can be added to the list. CACREP MCFC F1, F2, F3, F4, G1, G2, G3, H1, H2, H3; learning outcomes: 12, 13, 14, 15.
Due ____.

4. Signature Assignment: Family-of-Origin Paper

This is the capstone activity for this class. You will write a 10-12 page (typewritten, double spaced) introspective family autobiography in which you will describe your family of origin using the theories and terminology derived from the class readings and discussion. This paper will include (but is not limited to) the following: (a) a genogram of your family of origin; (b) a complete case study. This will include an overview of your family life cycle, ethnic influences, celebrations and rituals, rules, values, stories, and philosophy of life; (c) an intervention section: As a family therapist, what interventions would you recommend to treat or strengthen your family-of-origin? Each of the above sections should appear as different headers in your paper, using appropriate sub-headers as needed (APA style). Include an introduction and conclusion.

Part A: Genogram

In the first part of your paper, you will complete and analyze a three-generation genogram beginning with you and your siblings as the first generation. If you are, or have been, in a significant relationship (married or other arrangement), include this information and indicate children if present. Part A will have two parts: the actual genogram itself (with all the accompanying information, as well as a “key” that describes the symbols that you used) and the discussion (where you will analyze the patterns found in the genogram).

The Genogram

Include immediate and extended family members on your genogram. This will include your parents, siblings (and their partners if applicable), nieces/nephews, aunt/uncles, cousins (1st cousins only), and grandparents. If you are married/life-partnered, include your partner but *not* his/her family of origin. If you have children, include them below you. You should include important identifying information for each individual on the genogram (i.e. written/printed next to each individual). This information will include his/her name, age, relation to you (e.g., mother, grandfather, etc.), and relationship status (e.g., married, divorced, single, separated, etc.). Off to the side of each individual’s name, include his/her (a) primary occupation and (b) the presence of any known psychological and/or physical distress (addictions, mental illnesses, etc.). These may be hand-written.

Discussion/Exploration of the genogram: Explore and discuss (a) **significant dates** – identify all important dates (e.g., historical, familial, and relationship dates), discuss what information exists about these events, and what this information adds to your understanding of the patterns in your genogram; (b) **gender beliefs and values** – discuss how these beliefs/values have thread through your genogram (or not) and what impact this may have had on your development; (c) **secrets** – identify where secrets exist in the

make-up of the genogram. If there are no clear secrets, identify where (if anywhere) unknown or unspoken facets of people's lives exist. Discuss what impact these secrets (or lack thereof) have had on the boundaries and communication patterns in your genogram; (d) **losses** – discuss how the experience(s) of loss (remember how broad that term can be) has impacted the relationship patterns in your genogram. Explore how these events may have been perceived differently by different individuals; (e). **themes** – identify the themes that run through your genogram that answer the questions "Who are we?" and "How do we behave?" What do these themes reveal about your family's belief structure and how have they guided the family in making decisions about their current and future behaviors?

- Free software is available from <http://www.smartdraw.com/specials/ecomap.htm> or <http://www.genopro.com/genogram/> that you can use to create and print your genogram. Be aware that these are time-limited downloads (i.e. you should create your genogram soon after downloading and not wait until a month has passed to begin your work).

Part B :Case Study

In this section, you will complete a case study where you thoroughly explore some of this course's main concepts as they apply to your Family of Origin. They include: (a) **Family life cycle**: Compare/contrast your current life cycle stage with how your parents (or grandparents) experienced it. What issues are pertinent to you that were/were not pertinent to your parents? How do you account for these differences? (b) **Ethnic influences**: What is your ethnic identity? (Define what you mean by "ethnic"). What is the nature of your current family relationships, habits, attitudes, values, and lifestyle that are a reflection of your ethnic background? How are these the same or different than when you were growing up in your family of origin? How did your family of origin interact with other ethnic/racial groups? How does this differ in your current family situation? How do you account for the changes? (c) **Celebrations & rituals**: How are special occasions (e.g., birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays) celebrated in your family? What daily/weekly rituals are important to your family? How do your current traditions compare with those of your family of origin? How do you account for the changes? (d) **Rules & values**: What were some of the common rules found in your family? Which of these rules have you incorporated into your current family situation? Which rules have you discarded? What overt and covert values were played out within your family system? Which of these values have you incorporated/discarded? (e) **Stories**: What are some of your family's stories that are told? What are the underlying messages? What influence do these stories have? (e) **Philosophy of life**: How did your family "make meaning" of the world in which it lived? How have you implemented/ discarded this philosophy as it applies to your current situation?

Part C: Interventions

In this last section, you will explore those interventions that would be most useful in working with a family like the one you've described. These interventions can be directed at treating any deficits noted and/or to strengthen positive attributes. Be sure to answer such things as: In which stage of the life cycle is this family? What are some of the needs of this family? What are the strengths of this family? Which theory or blend of theories

would be most beneficial to this family (and why)? Which of the eight lenses of family therapy would be most effective in conceptualizing this family's issues? What goals would you set if you were to work with this family? What would success "look like" if the goals are reached? What advocacy initiatives might be beneficial for this family?

Describe how you might change your own behavior in your family system. Knowing what you have come to know about your family, would you like to interact differently with them? In other words, what behaviors might you change in terms of what you have come to know about your family of origin? What impact do you predict this change in your behavior will have on your family system? How will your family's response to your changes, in turn, affect you? What behaviors will you change in terms of your present family system (those who you are living with, or think of as your present family)? I assume that if you choose this option, you will undertake it with a degree of openness to learning both about the subject matter and about you as a person in context. This paper will be graded on your degree of openness to learning about yourself in relation to your family, the accurate use of course concepts, writing style, coverage of all areas listed above, and depth and length of paper. It will be read only by me and its contents held in strict confidence. CACREP MCFC A5, A6, B2, C1, C2, D1, D2, D3, E2, E3, F3; Learning outcomes: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12. Due ____

5. Exams: The midterm examination will consist of multiple choice and essay questions which will cover material up to the date of the exam. The final examination will consist of multiple choice and essay questions which will cover material through the final class.

Academic Integrity/Honor Code Policy:

Mississippi State University has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows: "*As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.*" Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Student Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Student Honor Code. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Student Honor Code. For additional information please visit: <http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/>

Cell Phone and Technology Policy:

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices in the Classroom: In order to limit classroom disruptions, as well as to protect against academic misconduct, the use by students of cell phones, messaging devices and other electronic devices is prohibited in the classroom. (*Mississippi State University Academic Operating Procedure 10.08*).

Students who text message, talk on their telephones, answer their cell phones during class, or who appear to be engaged with their cell phones in the classroom will be dismissed from class. No exceptions. Students should not bring their laptops to class. Students who use their laptops in class will be dismissed from class. No exceptions.

Nondiscrimination Policy:

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status. Mississippi State University conforms with Title IX of the education amendments of 1972, section 503. The department of counseling and educational psychology encourages the recruitment, acceptance, and enrollment of minority students of the region and beyond. Efforts are made to ensure that programs are diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status and disability. Members of minority groups are strongly encouraged to seek admission in the department.

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities:

In accordance with University policy, Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to meet the expectations of this course are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor and should register with the Office of Student Support Services as soon as possible. The Office of Student Support Services and Disability Support Services is located in 01 Montgomery Hall. The phone number is (662-325-3335) and their web address is <http://www.sss.msstate.edu/>

Field Experience:

None

Grading Point Scale

Your performance will be evaluated and your course grade determined by considering each of the following areas:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage Points</u>
Family Exploration Interview	10 points
Contemporary Family Issues Presentation	15 points
Cinema-therapy Clinical Presentation	20 points
Family-of Origin paper	25 points
Exams (3)	10 points each
Total=	100 points

A=93-100; B=83-92; C= 73-82; D= 72-61; F= Below 60

Evaluation of Papers and Essays

Each written component will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Content – comprehensiveness, appropriateness, quality..... 30 points

Evidence of critical analysis.....	30 points
Organization & logical development of materials.....	10 points
Documentation – form and adequacy of resources/references.....	10 points
Clarity of communication.....	10 points
Style.....	10 points
Total points.....	100 Incomplete

Grades

A grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be submitted in lieu of a final grade when the student, because of illness, death in his or her immediate family, or similar circumstances beyond his or her control, is unable to complete the course requirements or to take final examinations). Graduate students who receive a grade of “I” must complete all work no later than the last day of class of the next semester (excluding summer) whether the student is enrolled or not. Failure of graduate students to remove an “I” grade during the specified time will result in an automatic grade of "F". Once a grade of “I” has been converted to an “F” because of a student’s failure to complete the necessary course work or a lapse of the allowable time, no additional grade change will be allowed except under extreme circumstance(s) as recommended by the relevant deans and approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President.

Department Retention Policy:

The Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology faculty endorse the American Counseling Association (ACA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics that state that faculty members have a responsibility to dismiss students who are unable to render competent service due to academic or personal limitations. The faculty also recognizes their obligation: to assist students in obtaining remedial assistance as needed; to consult with colleagues and document their decision to refer students for assistance or to request that students be dismissed from the program; and also to assure that students have adequate recourse to address decisions made. For more information visit:

http://www.cep.msstate.edu/handbooks/pdf/2010_Graduate_Student_Handbook.pdf

Academic Programs Standards Policy:

The Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology defines unsatisfactory performance in graduate level course work as a grade of U, D, or F in any course and/or more than two grades below a B. Failure of the master’s comprehensive examination twice, failure of the written doctoral preliminary/comprehensive examination twice, oral doctoral preliminary/comprehensive examination twice, or failure of the doctoral dissertation defense twice also constitute unsatisfactory performance. Any of these or combination of these will result in termination of the student’s graduate program in the department. For more information visit:

http://www.cep.msstate.edu/handbooks/pdf/2010_Graduate_Student_Handbook.pdf

Course Instructor Policies:

Absences

Members of the faculty evaluate student fitness and performance on an ongoing-basis. The faculty makes judgments as to students' fitness and performance based on observations of course performance, evaluations of students' performances in simulated practice situations, supervisors' evaluations of students' performances in clinical situations, and their adherence to their discipline's codes of ethics. A series of formal evaluations are conducted at key stages of the student's education such as at the end of each fall and spring semester and prior to enrollment in practicum and/or internship. In addition to reviewing students' academic performance, students' personal characteristics related to professionalism are evaluated using the Personal Characteristics Review Form (PCRF). Students with multiple absences are also evaluated to determine their continued success in the program.

Missed Exams

There will be no makeup exams without instructor permission.

Missed Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted unless alternate arrangements have been made with the course instructor.

Written Assignment Policy

Students are expected to adhere to the APA style guidelines (6th ed.) for all written assignments submitted. Papers are expected to be of professional quality including clear and concise language, free of any grammar and punctuation errors, and organized to flow. In addition, all work submitted should be the result of the student's own original efforts. All submitted assignments that do not meet these standards will be graded accordingly.

Email Policy

Each student at MSU has access to an individual E-mail account through the university e-mail system. All students are expected to activate this e-mail account and to check messages on a regular basis. Announcements and attachments as supplements to the textbook may be sent periodically to class members through MyCourses. Students will be held responsible for accessing any e-mail or materials posted for this course. The E-mail and MyCourses systems are also very helpful for maintaining communication between the instructor and students.

Bibliography

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