



COURSE SYLLABUS

Title of Course: ***Foundations of Marriage and Family Therapy***

Course Nr: **COU 653-1**
Class Dates: 2015 Winter I Term

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I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:

An examination of various theories and models of intervention within families, with strong emphasis on systems theory. Students are expected to develop family and couple treatment plans and to demonstrate them in simulated family systems. (3 Credits)

II. Additional Description:

This course is designed to help students develop conceptual knowledge and effective professional skill conducting marital, couple and family therapy. The course involves an examination of foundation theories, models and methods of assessment and counseling intervention with emphasis on systems theory. Upon successful completion of the course students will be able to recognize the differences between individual and interpersonal therapy; understand the application of six fundamental systemic therapy approaches to identify and resolve individual, couple, and family emotional and behavior difficulty and; identify the dynamics of the emotionally healthy couple and family, as well as identify for effective intervention the dysfunctional mental health and relationship problems which occur in the interpersonal system .

Students preparing to work as marriage, couple, and family counselors are expected to learn and develop the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to address a wide variety of issues in the context of relationships and families (CACREP standards). In addition, because a high percentage of individual clinical and agency mental health cases seen today originate from, involve or are affected by systemic, family and couple dynamics, professionals working in the mental health field need this essential knowledge and skill base to provide effective services.

As unique from individual methodology, emphasis in this course is placed on the identification of dysfunctional system patterns adversely influencing families, marriages and couples relationships, and effective resolution of those difficulties utilizing evidence and research based counseling therapy techniques corresponding to the specific dysfunction dynamics which have been identified. Attention is given to student practice and demonstration of effective couple and family counseling techniques.

III. Prerequisite(s):

Counseling 601, 602, 610.

IV. Course Integrated into Focus area:

Mental Health Focus	Addictions Focus	School Counseling Focus
Elective	Elective	Elective

V. Course as Relates to External Requirements

CACREP Standards (2009)

FOUNDATIONS – A. Knowledge:

1. Knows the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple, and family counseling.
2. Understands the ethical and legal considerations specifically related to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
3. Knows the roles and functions of marriage, couple, and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals.
4. Knows the professional organizations, preparation standards, and credentials relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
5. Understands a variety of models and theories of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
6. Understands family development and the life cycle, sociology of the family, family phenomenology, contemporary families, family wellness, families and culture, aging and family issues, family violence, and related family concerns.
7. Understands the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, families, and households.

B. Skills and Knowledge:

1. Demonstrates the ability to apply and adhere to ethical and legal standards in marriage, couple, and family counseling.
2. Demonstrates the ability to select models or techniques appropriate to couples' or families' presenting problems.

C. Knowledge

1. Understands issues of marriage, couple, and family life-cycle dynamics; healthy family functioning; family structures; and family of origin and intergenerational influences in a multicultural society.
2. Recognizes specific problems (e.g., addictive behaviors, domestic violence, suicide risk, immigration) and interventions that can enhance family functioning.
3. Understands human sexuality (e.g., gender, sexual functioning, sexual orientation) and its impact on family and couple functioning.
4. Understands professional issues relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling, including recognition, reimbursement, and right to practice.

D. Skills/Practices

1. Uses preventive, developmental, and wellness approaches in working with individuals, couples, families, and other systems such as premarital counseling, parenting skills training, and relationship enhancement.
2. Uses systems theory to conceptualize issues in marriage, couple, and family counseling.
3. Uses systems theories to implement treatment, planning, and intervention strategies.
4. Demonstrates the ability to use procedures for assessing and managing suicide risk.
5. Adheres to confidentiality responsibilities, the legal responsibilities and liabilities of clinical practice and research, family law, record keeping, reimbursement, and the business aspects of practice.
6. Demonstrates the ability to recognize his or her own limitations as a marriage, couple, and family counselor and to seek supervision or refer clients when appropriate.

DIVERSITY AND ADVOCACY

E. Knowledge

1. Understands how living in a multicultural society affects couples and families.
2. Recognizes societal trends and treatment issues related to working with multicultural and diverse family systems (e.g., families in transition, dual-career couples, blended families, same-sex couples).
3. Understands current literature that outlines theories, approaches, strategies, and techniques shown to be effective in working with diverse family systems.
4. Understands the effects of racism, discrimination, sexism, power, privilege, and oppression on one's own life and that of the client(s).
5. Understands the effect of local, state, and national policies, programs, and services on diverse family systems.

F. Skills and Practices

1. Demonstrates the ability to provide effective services to clients in a multicultural society.
2. Maintains information regarding community resources to make appropriate referrals.
3. Advocates for policies, programs, and services that are equitable and responsive to the unique needs of couples and families.
4. Demonstrates the ability to modify counseling systems, theories, techniques, and interventions to make them culturally appropriate for diverse couples and families.

ASSESSMENT

G. Knowledge

1. Knows principles and models of assessment and case conceptualization from a systems perspective, including diagnostic interviews, mental diagnostic status examinations, symptom inventories, and psycho-educational and personality assessments.

2. Understands marriage, couple, and family assessment tools and techniques appropriate to clients' needs in a multicultural society.

3. Understands the impact of addiction, trauma, psychopharmacology, physical and mental health, wellness, and illness on marriage, couple, and family functioning.

H. Skills and Practices

1. Applies skills in interviewing, assessment, and case management for working with individuals, couples, and families from a system's perspective.
2. Uses systems assessment models and procedures to evaluate family functioning.
3. Determines which members of a family system should be involved in treatment.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

I. Knowledge

1. Understands how to critically evaluate research relevant to the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
2. Knows models of program evaluation relevant for the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
3. Knows evidence-based treatments and basic strategies for evaluating counseling outcomes in marriage, couple, and family counseling.

J. Skills/Practices

1. Applies relevant research findings to inform the practice of marriage, couple, and family counseling.
2. Develops measurable outcomes for marriage, couple, and family counseling programs, interventions, and treatments.
3. Analyzes and uses data to increase the effectiveness of marriage, couple, and family counseling interventions and programs.

VI. Purposes and Learning Objectives of the Course

- ❑ Recognize the differences between individual and interpersonal therapy; and understand the application of family therapy approaches to resolve individual, couple, and family emotional and behavior difficulty.
- ❑ Conceptualize individual, couple and family problems using a systemic framework.
- ❑ Appreciate the history of the family therapy movement and contributions of leading theorists.
- ❑ Understand key theories and variety of models and their application in couple, marriage and family counseling, i.e. strategic, psychodynamic, structural, experiential, communication, narrative, cognitive, integrative, behavioral, affect relations, Bowenian.
- ❑ Recognize when, and know how to effectively apply one or more of these theoretical approaches in a specific case; i.e. application of technique and method.
- ❑ Know and be able to apply professional clinic, legal and ethical principles governing the practice of marriage, couple and family therapy.
- ❑ Identify and be able to effectively use “seven key counseling skills” for conducting therapy.
- ❑ Become familiar with family therapy research literature, to include sources of professional information regarding therapy issues.
- ❑ Develop and demonstrate competent “therapist in training” level assessment and therapy skills ---which you are able to effectively apply in couple and family cases.
- ❑ Know the history, philosophy, and trends in marriage, couple and family counseling.
- ❑ Know the role and functions of marriage, couple and family counselors in a variety of practice settings and in relation to other helping professionals.
- ❑ Understand family development and stages of life cycles, sociology of the family, formation of couple and family system, phenomenology, family “wellness” including “normal or healthy” social and emotional functions, families and culture, environment influence, abuse and violence and related influences.
- ❑ Understand the impact of crises, disasters, debt, health and trauma-causing events on marriages, couples, families and households.
- ❑ Recognize parent and family dynamics that influence children’s success in education, and effective ways for the counselor to collaboratively work with schools, teachers and administrators to address problematic conditions.

VII. Course Content Outline:**Reading Assignments & Class Schedule—may be adjusted**

Week	Assignments	PPT Presentations	Case experience: practice session – role play
1	Chp. 1, 2, & 3 Sign up for power point presentations		
2	Chp. 4 & 5	presentations	
3	Chp 6 & 7	presentations	
4	Chp. 8 & 9	Normal paper due presentations	
5	Midterm/Salazar Discussion Questions Chapter 10	presentations	
6	Salazar Discussion, Chapter 11	presentations	
7	Chp. 12, 13 & 14	Research paper due presentations	
8	Problem specific conditions Collaboration with schools, physicians, outside agencies and resources. Referrals and use of consultants in your practice Therapist "pitfalls!" Transference and other maladies; your own family of origin influence. Strength-Based approaches		Normal paper and research paper presentations
9	Final Exam		

VIII. Textbook(s):

Nichols, M.P., (2013). *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods*. (10th ed.).
Boston, MA: Pearson; Allyn and Bacon
ISBN-10 0205827195 / ISBN-13: 9780205827190

Nichols, M.P. (2009). *Inside Family Therapy: A Case Study in Family Healing*.
(2nd ed.). Boston, MA; Pearson; Allyn and Bacon ISBN-10: 0205611079

IX. Expectations of Students:

DESCRIPTIONS OF GRADED AND PERFORMANCE LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. Role-play Therapy Exercises:

Class members are divided into small cooperative learning groups. Each student will be asked to create and/or work with a scripted couple or family case scenario and, with the help of the group, play the role of the therapist working with the couple.

Two or more members will be cast as the couple or family, while the remaining group members observe and conduct their own "as-if-therapist" assessment of the couple or family members. Observing students are also to gauge and record the therapist's methods, using among other things a "seven key skill areas" checklist. Both observers *and* the "couple or family" members who receive therapy, are to provide positive after-session technique and strategies *feedback* to the acting therapist. Checklists with critique notes are to be turned-in to the instructor.

Acting as an observer, your grade is influenced by how well you recognize and can explain family member dynamics, the "role-playing therapists" theoretical method(s), and how well you critique the therapist ---framing your feedback in a positive, appropriate manner. While acting as the therapist, you are graded on competence applying one or more *family therapy* theoretical approach(s) and your skill performing essential couple and family therapy.

Note: It is recognized not all students enter COU 653 with the same experience background in counseling. This class focuses on *developing* your ability to assess and then effectively work to resolve client problem dynamics guided by, and using family system therapy methods and theory. You will be graded on how well, with practice, you can recognize and apply appropriate family-therapy theoretical methods and interpersonal therapy tactics taught in *this* course.

2. Family therapy study assignment ---project and paper:

You are to write a paper describing (a) what constitutes a "normal" or emotionally and socially "healthy" family. The content of the paper must summarize the characteristics of a normal family or family type system, comprised of 2 adults and children living together in functional relationship. Essentially, the paper must define and illustrate: (a) a definition of what constitutes a "normal/healthy" family and; (b) the characteristics of such a group-system; (c) how life, marriage and family *stages* are negotiated and (d) how emotional needs addressed. The paper is to be brief, one to three, single spaced, pages in length with the addition of two pages: a one sheet cover page listing the paper title, who wrote the paper (you and/or study group), course and date and a second page citing references.

Members of cooperative learning groups may develop a paper collaboratively. But regardless of whether the group develops project information collectively or individually, *you* are responsible for the grade derived from the submitted copy and/or version. This project is to be completed and turned-in not later than the date specified by the instructor.

3. Review of Research:

A review of at least 3 journal articles which must have instructor approval is expected in APA format (title page, abstract, discussion, conclusions, & reference page). The focus is to identify applicable research that enhances an aspect of family therapy. Examples could include: the impact of step-parents, step-sibling rivalry, loss of income, loss of a parent member, etc. Other examples could include family systems approaches. This review needs to be directly related to chapter/power point assignments.

4. Examinations:

Two (2) exams are scheduled, covering specified chapters of material presented in course texts. These exams will consist primarily of multiple-choice items and descriptive response or essay questions calling for a definition or explanation of a specific term or concept.

The second, and final examination, is scheduled for the last class session. It will consist of multiple-choice questions, and a series of items requiring a brief definition of a term or concept, and will also include from one to four longer essay questions. This exam will cover information presented in specified text chapters, lectures, video presentations and group discussions. It is the examiner's discretion to select the modality of examination.

Several case scenarios may be presented to which you will be required to state which family therapy theoretical method(s) you would use to most effectively address the dynamics illustrated in the information that is presented.

You are expected to take examinations at their scheduled date and time. *No* advance, make-up, or late examinations will be permitted, except with prior approval of the instructor, or for unforeseen instances of serious illness.

5. Other course assignments:

In addition to the "healthy, normal" family paper, you are assigned other types of written work which are to be turned-in to the instructor, including:

- (1) Critiques: Observe, evaluate and critique other student's performance during *role-play* therapy exercises.
 - Submit a seven key skill areas" checklist Case Formulation and Analysis Form (Critique) for each session in which you are either the "role player" or an observer.
 - Entries on the form may be hand written, as long as they are legible "by the instructor's standards."
 - Mini treatment plans will be completed with one or two goals for role plays
 - An optional skill assessment (Critique) may utilized at the instructor's direction
 - These papers must be turned-in one week following the role-play session. Late submission will result in an automatic reduction in grade for the assignment.
- (2) Two Power point presentations: Students will be assigned 1 or more chapters to review & provide a brief power point presentation—no more than 5 slides on each chapter, and will integrate a peer reviewed journal article relating to the assigned chapter(s). In addition, students will provide a brief overview of their research paper & "healthy, normal" family paper (based upon a review of the peer-reviewed literature on the 8th day of class.

3) Discussion questions over the Salazar Case will be passed out after the midterm. Students will be expected to complete the questions for a discussion the following week.

6. General policies, guidelines and information

(1) Study responsibility: There is a very substantial body of knowledge covered in this course. Lessons will emphasize information contained in assigned course text which comprehensively covers the field of family therapy. To broaden the scope of instruction, and develop the professional skills, you will have opportunity to effectively apply theoretical concepts or techniques through such activities as observing and practicing case assessment and therapy techniques. These activities will be structured to give you a chance to benefit from the observations and positive colleague *feedback* of your colleagues and the course instructor.

Even if "something" is not *specifically* mentioned in class, you are still individually responsible for learning the information presented in course textbook, whether or not actually discussed by the instructor.

(2). Cancellations: Should bad weather, or unforeseen event, cause cancellation of a lecture session, every attempt will be made to reschedule the class. Please insure the instructor has a current phone number where you can be notified of class changes, or in some cases, if the instructor needs to contact you.

(3). Individual assistance and participation: The instructor recognizes that you are taking this course to learn! The structure of instructor led in-class discussions and opportunities afforded by cooperative collaborative learning groups are some of the venues in which questions can be addressed, theories analyzed, and general learning facilitated.

- ❑ You are *encouraged* to raise questions during class --so that inquiry will disclose where clarification is needed, and afford opportunity to add depth to lesson activities and resolve questions likely held by more than one person.
- ❑ Your comments, personal-life experience, observations, and ideas *are welcome and beneficial* to everyone's learning.

It is important *you* be given personal attention. In addition to consultation by the instructor *during* class sessions, to resolve questions not clarified in class, or to address something that concerns you, the instructor will be available after class. But because each session lasts until 10:30 pm, you may wish to make an appointment to visit with the instructor at another time. If you wish to contact the instructor, refer to the telephone numbers listed on Page 1 of this Syllabus.

(4). Attendance: This graduate course involves not only text study and research, but significantly revolves around demonstrations, discussions, lectures, media presentations and extensive planned learning experiences occurring *in* class. These cannot be duplicated. Just one evening class is equivalent to four, one hour, weekly on-campus lecture sessions.

Therapy methods and techniques are best learned from practice, observation and insight gained from the analysis that occurs during class presentation and discussion. Because how well you will be able to recognize and apply therapy techniques hinges on observation of in-action case situations and the analysis of different presenting conditions modeled by the instructor and colleagues, *no make-up* work is available for missed classes.

You are expected and required to attend all sessions and/or make-up sessions. Grades will be automatically reduced for an unexcused absence (generally a ½ of a letter grade—instructor's discretion). The exception to this rule would be if you were seriously incapacitated, i.e., ill, or injured, or a significant circumstance existed i.e., death in the immediate family, which unavoidably required your presence elsewhere at a given class time. Make-up work would then be assigned.

(5). Recommended readings, resources and outside class activity: Between class sessions, you are expected to study the course texts, complete designated assignments, *prepare* for group discussion and role-play case demonstration activities.

Because of the comprehensive nature of course texts, no additional required readings are specifically required. The instructor maintains a personal library, and the American Association for Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT) provides extensive resources for students and practitioners. **You are encouraged to access their web site at: www.aamft.org**

(6). Consumer warning: This is not a course about "how-to" have a happy marriage and family. It is a professional graduate level course focused on assessment, case formulation, therapy techniques, methods and strategies for those already in or intending to enter the mental health field.

(7) Professional competencies: One of the hallmarks of this course is the excellent opportunity it affords for you to actually practice and receive "feedback" regarding the effectiveness of your approach to a client, and how well you apply a particular theoretical strategy you have elected to use in a given case. When you subscribe to the class, you can look forward to one of the few opportunities counselors ever experience in their careers to advise colleagues how well they performed a therapy method role, and in-turn, to receive positive suggestions from them.

Also, you can insist upon receiving, and expect the instructor to candidly provide you with individual "suggestions" or critiques addressing your personal and professional performance as displayed during course roll play exercises, examinations and before or after class.

As a professional career course engaged in training mental health counselors --- the second grade for the class, and successful completion of course requirements, entails your receiving performance critiques and constructively acting upon suggestions.

(8). Additional comments: Keep in mind that while this is a professional course designed to facilitate your effectiveness as a counselor, the primary objective of the class is to teach you how to be effective addressing the needs of *families and couples*. You cannot get this knowledge and expertise anywhere else.

Therefore, it is important to understand this is not just a repetition of practice of counseling methods you've acquired in other classes. In *this* class you must learn and demonstrate methods appropriate for effective therapeutic work specifically with two or more individuals closely associated as *families* or as *related or nonrelated couples* and you are expected to know and be able to use the *theories and techniques* underlying family/marriage therapy.

X. Basis for Student Evaluation:

You will receive two "grades" for this course; one reflecting *academic knowledge and skills*, and one reflecting your *professional skill* development.

Academic and professional performance grades are earned on the basis of how well you display "mastery" of course objectives. Your performance, associated with your individual effort and acquired knowledge and skills will be evaluated by the instructor on the basis of several types of information including:

1. Cooperative group role-play therapy exercises	15%
2. Healthy/normal family paper	10%
3. Salazar Case study questions and discussion	10%
4. Attendance; Participation; Critiques/feedback	10%
5. Research Paper	10%
5. PPT presentations	15%
6. Mid-course exam	15%
7. Final Examination	15%

 100%

Your *professional evaluation* and will be based, in-part, on demonstrated performance as a therapist in the courses role-play and practice case activities. You will be given opportunities to prepare for role-play "therapy sessions" and practice therapeutic and assessment techniques. This evaluation will also be influenced by displayed aptitude, effort, motivation, professional traits and characteristics.

Throughout the course you will receive feedback from the instructor and class on your family counseling performance. You will also have the opportunity to benefit from observing others conduct therapy, watch demonstration and discussion of "model" techniques, and profit from the expertise you can gain from having to technically observe then positively and objectively critique others performance.

Initially, therapy role-play and feedback will not be graded in order to facilitate your ability to learn and try new skills without undue pressure. Later, however, as you develop confidence and skills, your therapy will be graded in role-play and case sessions.

Grading scale: Letter grades are used to reflect performance. The point value attached to those grades is stated in the Done College Catalog. For the course as a whole, or any single activity where grades are determined, the following guidelines apply:

A+	95 to 100%	B+	85 to 86%	C	70 to 74%
A	90 to 94%	B	80 to 83%	F	< 70
A-	86 to 89%	C+	75 to 79%		

XI. Methods of Instruction: A combination of:

This course will include nine (9) evening sessions, of four hours, thirty minutes (4:30) each. Classes will involve collaborative *cooperative learning* activities, as well as more traditional lecture, video recorded therapy demonstrations including discussion of theory and methodology presented by leading theorists and practitioners, and instructor supervised professional skill development role-play counseling sessions.

You will be given extensive background handouts addressing various therapy issues. Lessons will be professionally scripted and attractively presented using Power Point technology ---to facilitate and enhance your understanding and insure complete subject coverage.

In this process, you are encouraged to take an active and collegial stance which involves: (a) working with other graduate students to achieve learning goals; (b) individual accountability for one's own performance in the group and end results; (c) collaboration in developing and practicing role-playing activities, decision making, communicating; (d) providing each other with positive feedback regarding case study and role-play performance; (d) group processing and planning; (e) learning and demonstrating comprehensive knowledge of family therapy theory and methods.

Classes will involve discussion, lecture, video, media and student presentations, skill demonstrations and practice therapy role-play experiential exercises. *In addition, students will be expected to participate in outside of class cooperative group activity, writing, study projects and individual study, requiring not less than three (3) hours each week.*

Web-assisted, Blackboard, instructions and reference material will supplement instruction and written work.

XII. Academic Policy Statement:

In addition to policies and guidelines detailed in Section 5, it is important to keep in mind that academic honesty is one of the most important qualities influencing the character and vitality of Doane College. Academic dishonesty is defined to include those acts which would deceive, cheat, or defraud so as to

promote or enhance one's scholastic record. It includes: academic misconduct, dishonesty, plagiarism and cheating or knowingly or actively assisting another person in doing the same.

Violations of academic honesty represent a serious breach of discipline and professional conduct, and may be considered grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the Master of Arts Counseling Program and from the College. Students are responsible for upholding the principles of academic honesty as they would another professional and ethical standard. Refer to:

<http://www6.Doane.edu/judaffairs/code.html>

Honest, ethical conduct during examinations dictates that individual work is mandatory. Students are required to *Turn-off* all electronic devices; cell phones, pagers and place them off the desk/table top, *out-of-sight*. Use of notes, texts or other materials during an examination, asking questions of another student or looking at other student's test paper or answers is forbidden. Violation of these directions and/or Doane College examination policies will result in an automatic failing grade for an examination where violation occurs.

XIII. Students with Disabilities Statement:

If a student has a special need addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or feels a need for a particular accommodation or assistance to facilitate their effective attainment of course objectives and successful learning, please notify the instructor at the beginning of the course.

You must register as a student with a disability in the office of the Dean, Master of Arts in Counseling. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor prior to requesting reasonable accommodation. Failure to do this may result in not receiving the requested accommodation or assistance.

Refer to: <http://www.doane.edu/cs/services/disability.htm>

XIV. Civility, Respect and Classroom Etiquette:

Doane College strives to offer learning experiences and opportunities designed to help students think effectively, develop the capacity to communicate, differentiate values, and make relevant judgments. To do this successfully, many times multiple perspectives will be presented; some of which may represent points of view on which everyone will not agree. A successful educational experience requires a shared sense of respect among and between students, the instructor and various points of view.

Further, it is to be expected that the instructor will treat all students with dignity and respect –it is also expected that student will treat the instructor and other students with the same respect. In order to facilitate this process more effectively, students are asked the following: 1) before class turn-off all electronic devices including cell phone, ipads, laptop computers, and note pads; 2) place all electronic equipment out-of-sight; 3) refrain from text messaging during class; 4) avoid distracting behavior, e.g., popping gum, noisy eating, clipping finder nails; 5) cease talking and side conversation when the instructor or other students are speaking; 6) maintain respectful interactions. Finally, personal criticism, ridicule or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

XV. Professional Performance Evaluation:

Some of the criteria used by this course's instructor has been cited in Section X. In addition, keep in mind that Professional Performance, as assessed within the Master of Arts in Counseling program is guided by the characteristics identified in the Graduate Catalog and described in the rubrics published in the Student Handbook. The beliefs and attitudes related to the areas of *competence*, *reflection* and *caring*, are the guiding influence with the nine foundational counselor dispositions assessed throughout the program. These are: 1) Genuineness, 2) Congruence, 3) Non-judgmental Respect, 4) Emotional Awareness, 5) Ethical Understanding, 6) Concreteness, 7) Empathy, and 8) Professional Commitment. See Student Handbook.

XVI. Professional Identity and Theoretical Orientation

An online portfolio is maintained in the student's personal file on the Program website.