

FAMILY MEDIATION SPRING 2009

AECO 4010.092 & 5050.092
Institute of Applied Economics
University of North Texas

CLASS DAYS AND HOURS: 6:00 – 9:50 Mondays January 26 – April 20

CLASS LOCATION: UNT Dallas Campus, Room 344

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

LaCrisia “Cris” Gilbert
Phone -214/ 754-0022 (day)
Cellular phone: 214/802-3339
E-mail address: lagilbert@dms-adr.org
Office Hours –by appointment

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION:

UNT Denton Campus
Chilton Hall, Room 263
Phone: 940/565-3437

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Examines the issues involved in a divorce and meets the Texas training requirement in divorce mediation. This course will include family law; family dynamics; child development, family violence; practice considerations; mediation skills and role plays. Topics include child custody, support, spousal maintenance and property.

Catalog Description:

Topics include family law, family dynamics, child development, family violence, practice considerations, and skills. Meets the Family Mediation Training Standards as adopted by the Texas Mediation Trainers Roundtable. Prerequisite: AECO 4000. 3 credit hours. 40-hour basic mediation as required by the Texas Practices & Remedies Code Chapter 157.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to

1. Explain the process, principles, techniques, and significance of mediation and how they apply to family disputes.
2. Explain how sociological variables such as culture, social structure, personality, conflict, power, and social interaction are relevant to families and family disputes.
3. Describe how theories of attachment, adult adjustment, and the stages or stations of divorce apply to families and divorce mediation.
4. Explain the sociological and psychological factors involved in the divorce process, parenting, and the consequences for and adjustment of children of divorce.
5. Explain the legal aspects and issues of divorce and their significance for the mediation process.
6. Demonstrate skills and techniques of mediation.
7. Demonstrate communication skills.

Suggested Textbooks:

Sampson & Tindall's Texas Family Code Annotated, Latest Edition
O'Connor's Texas Family Code Annotated, Latest Edition
The Family Lawyer's Essential Tool Kit 2006 Edition, A Publication of the Family Law Section of the State Bar of Texas
The Handbook of Family Dispute Resolution by: Alison Taylor. Jossey-Bass 2002. ISBN -0-7879-5639-2
Texas Family Code

Instructor's Handouts:

Instructor will supply handouts for each class period.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- I. The Family
- II. Sociological Perspectives and Overview
- III. Child Development/Psychological Perspectives
- IV. The Divorce Process
- V. Child Custody
- VI. Child Support
- VII. Visitation / Access / Possession
- VIII. Property / Finances
- IX. The Mediation Process
- X. Practice Issues
- XI. Conclusion

ACCOMODATIONS

Your instructor complies with the American Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a qualified disability as defined in the Act and would like to request accommodations, please see the instruction by the second week of class. If you have any questions, please contact the instructor, the Office of Disability Accommodation in the University Union, or Greta A. Davis, MS, NCC, Student Development Coordinator, UNT System Center at Dallas, Phone: 972-780-3632.

METHODS OF ASSESSING OUTCOMES AND EVALUATIVE MEASURES

1. **CLASS PARTICIPATION:**

Attendance at all sessions is required. Participation means the student is active in the teaching/learning process and is demonstrated by: participating in role-plays by: **playing role of mediator at least once**, acting as critical observer when you play one of the parties, processing or debriefing role-plays. You are also expected to contribute to class discussions by sharing research and experiences, listening, asking questions and responding to what others say, and by applying techniques and good mediation practices and behaving in a professional manner.

NOTE: Please inform me if you object to my video-taping you during role-plays.

Ethics Discussion: Read article on the mediation profession and participate in group discussion about it.

2. **PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL**

Description of Journal: The journal is on-going, informal writing about what is happening internally in you during the course. This format allows processing of feelings, experiences, learning, and reactions. It is a way to reflect on and expand self-awareness. The journal is informal in its writing and structure. It is an opportunity for you to create - to generate ideas, intentions, and goals for yourself as a mediator and as a person. It allows you to chronicle your growth and your ability to apply the skills, ideas you encounter. If you have concerns about your privacy in the journal, please speak to me and we can make appropriate arrangements.

3. **APPLICATION PAPER**

MODERN AND POSTMODERN FAMILY ANALYSIS

- You will write a paper applying the concepts of the “modern” and “postmodern” families.
 - In the paper you are to use, as the basis of analysis:
 - Lectures and discussion in class
 - Other sources such as the books, periodicals and internet research.
 - Handouts
 - In the paper you must explicitly cite both “modern” and “postmodern” concepts and explain how your family of origin and/or your family of choice fits or does not fit each of those models.
 - I suggest that you might think of your family on a continuum or scale in which “modern” is number 1 on the left end of a scale and “postmodern” is number 10 on the right end of the scale. You can use the continuum as an overall rating of your family AND as a ratings for the variables such as: boundaries, rules, child-centeredness, etc.
- The paper should be between 1400 and 2000 words in length. [As an example, if you are typing on a word processor, 1500 words is about 5 pages double-spaced, 12 pt Ariel font, 1 inch margins all around.]
- **The paper is due *the beginning*** of the second-to-last day of class.

4. **FINAL EXAM**

Each student will prepare a 10-15 minute presentation on a family mediation research topic approved by the instructor. You should choose a family mediation sub-field that you are interested in or may want to practice in (e.g. grandparent's rights, spousal abuse, same-sex couples, premarital agreements, etc.). You will also be required to submit a brief outline of your presentation or written multiple choice, short answer exam.

GRADING POLICY

40%-Class Participation including: a) playing mediator b) participating in ethics discussion
10%-Journal
10%-Application Paper
40%-Final Exam

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- As stated above, attendance is an aspect of Class Participation.
- Attendance at all classes and arriving on time are required. Special arrangements may be made by speaking privately with the instructor outside the classroom setting.
 - Respond to roll call
- **Tardy:** If you arrive after roll call give a note to the instructor with the following:
Your name, Statement that you arrived late, Time of your arrival, Day / Date

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

In conjunction with successful completion of AECO 4000 Mediation, and AECO 4420 Practicum, this course meets the current State of Texas requirements for court-referred family mediations. In order to receive the mediation certificate, you must submit a written request to the Institute of Applied Economics. Certificate request forms are available in the departmental office in Chilton Hall, or over the Internet. See departmental website at <http://www.unt.edu/aeco/adrstudies.htm> for more information

DROP PROCEDURES

It is your responsibility to drop this course if you see that you are unable to attend for any reason. Failure to drop will result in a performance grade (usually and "F") for the course at the end of the semester.

METHODOLOGY

Class discussions, role-plays, lecture, multimedia presentations, and other experiential exercises will be used to reach course goal and objectives.

OTHER INFORMATION You are responsible for any directions, changes in policy, or assignments made in class even though you may be absent or late. **ELECTRONIC DEVICES** Please turn off all electronic devices such as beepers and cellular phones. If you must leave them on for any reason, please inform the instructor.

CLASSROOM RULES AND EXPECTATIONS The values and behavioral guidelines will be determined by the class in collaboration with the instructor.

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS STATEMENT A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence if, not later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester, the student notified the instructor of each class scheduled on the date that the student would be absent for a religious holy day. A "religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. The notice shall be in writing and shall be delivered by the student personally to the instructor, with receipt acknowledged and dated by the instructor or by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the instructor. A student who is excused under this section may not be penalized for the absence, but the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination.

CHANGES IN THIS DOCUMENT The instructor for this course has the right to change any portion of this syllabus, including the requirements. Students will be notified of these changes.

ASSIGNMENTS, REQUIREMENTS, AND DEADLINES

DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS
January 26	Introduction Psychology of the Family Family Systems – Genograms Psychological Effects Of Separation/Divorce For Adults and Children Types of Family Law Cases Phases of Divorce Mediation Opening Statements Mediation Statutes in Texas	Prepare Family Genogram
February 2	Genograms Due Possession Order Rights and Duties Modification Suit Affecting Parent Child Relationship (SAPCR) Social Study Temporary Orders Ad-Litem	Family Court/Mediation Observation Week
February 9	Mediation Skills and Techniques	
February 16	Special Case Issues	
February 23	Legal Aspect of Family Cases Budgeting and Support Child Support Spousal Maintenance Arrearage/Retro-Active Support Medical Support Withholding Order Dividing Marital Property and Debts Community and Separate Property Economic Contribution/Reimbursement Preparital/Marital Property Agreements Tax Consequences of Divorce Possession Order Rights and Duties Modification Suit Affecting Parent Child Relationship (SAPCR) Social Study Temporary Orders Ad-Litem	Family Court/Mediation Observation Week
March 2	Ethics in Family Mediation Impasse in Family Mediation	
March 9	Power Imbalances Domestic Violence Child Abuse	
March 16	*NO CLASS – Spring Break	

DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS
March 23	Marital Mediation/Pre-nups	
March 30	Writing an Effective Agreement Mock Mediation	
April 6	Starting and Building Your Mediation Practice Mock Mediation	Exam Review
April 13	Final Mock of Entire Family Mediation	
April 20	Final Exam	