Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte

PC 511 – Introduction to Pastoral Counseling
Fall 2015

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Christopher Cook, M.A., M.Div.  Email: ccook2@gordonconwell.edu
Office: Room 214  Office Hours: Upon Request
Phone: (704) 940-5835  Online Dates: Sept. 8 – Oct. 31
Residency Dates and Times: Nov. 2 and 3, 9:30am – 5:00pm, Nov. 4, 9:30am – 4:30pm

Course Description:

Introduction to Pastoral Counseling is designed to equip individuals in a variety of ministry and church settings to offer effective, short-term counseling and basic care from an integrative, pastoral perspective. Themes will include: theoretical approaches to pastoral counseling, the development of a personalized approach to pastoral counseling, the role of a pastoral counselor, pastoral counseling ethics, multicultural competence in pastoral counseling, and self-care. This course is designed with an understanding of students as active participants in the learning process. Students are expected not only to participate in discussions, but also to take an active part in designing their own learning experience through the selection of topics to focus on in a range of assignments related to the learning objectives. This course is designed to value critical thinking, courteous dialogue, theological reflection, openness of expression, empathy toward others, and honest interaction.

Relationship to Curriculum:

PC511 is a required course in the Master of Divinity (M.Div.), the Master of Arts in Christian Ministries (MA-CM) and the MAR-Hybrid with a concentration in Ministry. The course also serves as a potential option for a general elective within the Master of Arts in Christian Thought (MACT) and the Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (MABS).

PC511 builds upon foundational courses in biblical studies, Christian thought and ministry to provide a pastoral perspective on the ministry of counseling and the initial skills required to provide parishioners and other needing people assistance when facing grief, crisis, guilt, suffering, relational stress and needed guidance in other life challenges.

Relationship to GCTS Mission Statement

Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry. The church is committed to a holistic approach to ministry
that addresses the full range of human needs: spiritual, relational, emotional, mental, and physical. The contemporary pastor is confronted with serious needs and problems in all of these areas and needs to be able to cogently address his or her parishioners’ needs with poise, perspective, and effective skills to fulfill the challenging call of Christ.

SAKAI

Course documents, calendar and other support will be provided on the SAKAI learning management platform at https://sakai.gcts.edu. In addition, students will be asked to complete four learning modules online before the three day residency beginning November 2, 2015. Students enrolled in the class should be able to access SAKAI by using their student email names and student I.D. numbers.

Course Objectives:

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

1. Understand and articulate a biblical and theological basis for pastoral counseling.
2. Explain several theoretical approaches to counseling that are compatible with a pastoral counseling model and describe their application in concrete counseling situations.
3. Identify and utilize key communication skills needed in the context of Christian care and pastoral counseling.
4. Create a personal philosophy of pastoral care and counseling that integrates theological, theoretical and personal elements into a concrete approach suitable for a specific ministerial context.
5. Understand and observe basic ethical principles applicable to the practice of pastoral counseling.
6. Explain the role culture plays in the counseling process and develop greater inter-cultural sensitivity needed for the practice of pastoral counseling.
7. Articulate principles of and formulate a personalized plan for self-care.
8. Identify and assess basic types of psychological problems encountered in the local church and determine proper steps for pastoral care and referral.
9. Explain the primary issues and pastoral care approaches needed for ministry to common presenting issues in congregational life such as depression, anxiety, anger management, abuse, marital problems and concerns regarding illness and death.

Method of Instruction: Course instruction will take place through a variety of methods, including posted online lectures, asynchronous discussion board dialogue, class lectures and discussion in residency, student interaction, experiential practice, review and reflection exercises, and other instruction methods. The course will be structured around six online lessons, each lasting between one and two weeks, and a three-day on-campus residency.

PC511 Required Readings:


Students should read each of these books in their entirety unless otherwise stated. Additional required reading will be posted on Sakai that may include book chapters and professional articles.

**Class Assignments:**

Grading for this course will be based upon the following assignments. Students will complete these projects and exercises and submit them by the identified due date. Grades will be determined by the extent and quality of the work completed. **The descriptions of these assignments and grading criteria can be found at the end of this syllabus. The instructions for the online lessons will be found on the SAKAI website.** Further explanations of each project will be provided during the course residency.

1. *Philosophy of Pastoral Care Paper*

2. *Skills Video Project*

3. *Case Conceptualization Paper*

4. *Completion of Four Online Lessons*

**All work for this course will be due no later than December 19, 2015.** Any extensions beyond this date must be determined and approved by the Registrar’s office which will consult with the professor of record.

**Grading:**

Grades for the course will be determined by performance on the above exercises and projects. Students can achieve a total of 100 points from courses assignments with the following grade scale and assignment weighting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy of Pastoral Care Paper</td>
<td>25 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Conceptualization Paper</td>
<td>25 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Video Project</td>
<td>15 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>35 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution:

- **A+** 98-100
- **A** 94-97
- **A-** 90-93
- **B+** 87-89
- **B** 84-86
- **B-** 80-83
- **C+** 77-79
- **C** 74-76
- **C-** 70-73
- **D+** 67-69
- **D** 64-66
- **D-** 60-63

*All assignments, including online discussions, are expected to be written on the level of graduate education. Incorrect grammar, spelling mistakes, and other indications of poor writing will result in the loss of grade points. Make sure you proof read your work before submitting it.*

**Attendance:**

Students are required to attend the residency for the course and complete all online modules. Unexcused absenteeism will result in a loss of grade points. Unexcused absence of more than 8 hours will result in an automatic reduction of one whole letter grade. Late online assignments will also result in loss of grade points. If for reason of illness or family death or emergency, contact the instructor regarding these events to determine appropriate make-up activities. For additional information concerning attendance, consult the *Student Handbook* requirements and guidelines.

**Course Schedule and Lesson Preparation**

- **9/08**  Lesson #1  *Theological Foundations for Pastoral Counseling*
- **9/21**  Lesson #2  *Theoretical Framework for Pastoral Counseling*
- **10/05**  Lesson #3  *Ethics in Pastoral Counseling*
- **10/19**  Lesson #4  *Pastoral Counseling Competencies*
- **11/2-4**  Three Day Residency in Charlotte
  - *Topics in Pastoral Counseling*
  - *Communication Skills Assessment*
- **11/5 – 12/19**  Project Completion Period
Assignment #1

Philosophy of Pastoral Care Paper

The Philosophy of Pastoral Care Paper will present your current approach to pastoral care based on your theological framework, your theoretical approach to pastoral counseling, and your particular ministry setting. This paper will be the culmination of your study and thinking throughout the online portion of the semester, and will form the foundation upon which your Case Conceptualization Paper will be written. This paper will be 10-12 pages in length, not including title page and references. A minimum of 12 resources should be used. Internet sources should be evaluated for quality. Please avoid use of wikipedia.com and other general Internet sources.

This paper will cover the following topics:

- Your theology of pastoral counseling, including:
  o Your definition of pastoral counseling
  o A description of your biblical and theological framework supporting pastoral counseling
- Your personal approach to pastoral counseling, including:
  o Key theoretical models and counseling frameworks that direct your understanding of pastoral counseling
  o Your understanding of the dynamics between counselor and counselee
  o Your understanding of the integration between theology and psychology
- Your understanding of how pastoral counseling fits into your ministry context, including:
  o How your theology and personal approach to pastoral counseling influence and are influenced by your calling, personal history, and ministry context
  o How your approach will be applicable in the multicultural context of your ministry
- Your understanding of how personal and pastoral ethics and boundaries guide the counseling process
- Your strategy for self-care, spiritual formation, and professional growth

This assignment will be worth a maximum of 25 points and will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Following appropriate guidelines of topics, length of paper, writing style, etc.
- Clarity, logical coherence, and quality of writing
- Ability to support statements with appropriate citations and references
- Quality and depth of biblical-theological framework
- Length and quality of bibliography
• Ability to synthesize and integrate personal, theological, theoretical and contextual factors into a cogent description of your counseling philosophy and approach.

This assignment should be submitted to the assignments section of Sakai by **11:59pm, October 31, 2015.**

**Assignment #2: Skills Video Project**

The Skills Video will be a video recorded demonstration of your use of basic communication skills. These skills will be discussed and practiced throughout the online portion of the course. The final project will consist of a 10-15 minute recorded interview in which you demonstrate your ability to use basic communication skills in a counseling setting. The “client” will choose a topic to discuss from several provide prompts, allowing you to demonstrate the use of basic communication skills in the interview.

The interview will be will be worth a **maximum of 15 points** and will be graded on your use of the following communication skills:

• Ethical and multicultural competence
• Attending behaviors
• Open and closed questions
• Encouraging, paraphrasing, and summarizing
• Reflection of feeling and meaning
• Focusing

*Be sure to bring a video recording device with you to the residency portion of the class. This device should allow you to record your interview and upload that recording to a hard drive or Sakai for grading.*

This assignment should be submitted to the instructor by **11:59pm, November 7, 2015.**

**Assignment #3: Case Conceptualization Paper**

The Case Conceptualization Paper will be based on your Philosophy of Pastoral Counseling paper, and will demonstrate how to apply your approach to pastoral counseling to a specific problem that you are likely to encounter in your ministry setting. This paper will be **8-10 pages** in length, not including the cover page and references, and will be written in APA style. You should include at least **10 references** and also refer to your Philosophy of Pastoral Counseling paper. Internet sources should be evaluated for quality. Please avoid use of wikipedia.com and other general Internet sources.

This paper will include:

• A description of a particular problem that you are likely to encounter (or have encountered) in your ministry setting. Example topics are: marital dysfunction, anxiety, depression, spiritual doubt, domestic violence, sexual addiction, among others. See the
Appendix for a longer list of potential topics. This description should include the following elements:

- Common symptoms or presenting elements
- Etiological factors
- Demographic information (prevalence in the general population, groups that are more susceptible, etc.)
- Your understanding of this problem from a theological perspective
- Common evidence-based treatment interventions and models

- An analysis of this problem through the lens of your philosophy of pastoral counseling. This description should include:
  - A conceptualization of this problem from the perspective of your chosen model of pastoral counseling
  - A treatment plan for this problem specific to your approach to pastoral counseling
  - A discussion of how your own family background, spiritual journey, and ministry setting influence and are influenced by your understanding of this problem
  - Application of relevant ethical and boundary issues specific to the problem
  - Application of multicultural implication specific to the problem

This assignment will be **worth a maximum of 25 points** and will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Following appropriate guidelines of topics, length of paper, writing style, etc.
- Clarity, logical coherence, and quality of writing
- Ability to support statements with appropriate citations and references
- Quality and depth of biblical-theological framework
- Length and quality of bibliography
- Ability to apply your philosophy of pastoral counseling to a real and common problem that will occur in your ministry context.

This assignment should be submitted to the assignments section of Sakai by **11:59pm, December 19, 2015.**

**Syllabus Addendum**

**Academic Standards**

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing.
Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

**ADA Policy**
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class**
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy**

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades**

Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals, who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

**Returned Work**

Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self-addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued.
Virtual Writing Center

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.
Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.

Additional Course Bibliography

It is expected that students will develop a list of bibliographic resources which support pastoral counseling and which may be utilized in the future as part of a “database” of materials for referral and for resourcing the counseling process. A list of these resources and a short annotated bibliography should be submitted with the final exam.

Suggestions for reading follow, but the list is far from exhaustive so feel free to choose other appropriate, relevant sources. Newer editions may be available in some cases.

Bobgan, M. & Bobgan, D. Competent To Minister: The Biblical Care of Souls, 1996
Campbell, A. Rediscovering Pastoral Care, Westminster, 1981.
Estadt, B. *Pastoral Counseling in the Global Church: Voices from the Field*, Wipf and Stock, 2005.