I. Course Description

The course serves as a complement to CO 500, where theories of counseling are presented, with their corresponding pragmatic examples covering diverse approaches. It seeks to apply theoretical frames of mind to practical aspects in counseling, by focusing on skills and strategies of clinical nature. It also serves as a proactive training in preparedness to (or concurrently taken with) to engage in practicum and internship experiences, in placements under supervision. The course is geared to the student's development as a professional counselor — defined in terms of identity, ethical stances, efficacy in employing skills and strategies, and boundaries. Relatedness to other professionals — peers, supervisors, trainees — and to agencies, are added dimensions of this course.

The course lays the groundwork for the acquisition and utilization of strategies and skills in counseling. Intake interviews, assessment, formulation, diagnostic impression, and disposition of cases, as well as choice of treatment modalities and strategies to be employed, are part of the content to be covered in classes. The student will learn diverse approaches, practices, and skills to be used in the practice of individual, couple, family, and group counseling. Students will have the opportunity to practice their listening skills, as well as to observe the process of counseling, by means of experiential triads. Students will have the opportunity to enhance their writing skills by means of observational reports gathered from the experiential triads and delivered them as assignments after these experiences have taken place.

II. Course Objectives

The course is designed to provide knowledge and opportunities for students to develop basic skills for Mental Health Counselors, and to:

1. Demonstrate awareness about typical characteristics of individuals and communities served by a variety of institutions and agencies that offer community counseling services;
2. Be familiar with models, methods, and principles of program development and service delivery for a clientele based on assumptions of human and organizational development, including prevention, implementation of support groups, peer facilitation training, parent education, career/occupational information and counseling, and encouragement of self-help;
3. Acquire effective strategies for promoting client understanding of and access to community resources;
4. Demonstrate the application of principles and models of biopsychosocial assessment, case conceptualization, theories of human development and concepts of normalcy and psychopathology leading to diagnoses and appropriate counseling plans;
5. Demonstrate knowledge of the principles of diagnosis and the use of current diagnostic tools, including the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual;

6. Have a basic knowledge of effective strategies for client advocacy in public policy and other matters of equity and accessibility; and

7. Demonstrate the application of appropriate individual, couple, family, group, and systems modalities for initiating, maintaining, and terminating counseling, including the use of crisis intervention, and brief, intermediate, and long-term approaches.

III. Required Texts:


Recommended Texts


Plus: Journal Articles to be consulted with, related to the diverse skills/strategies/practices.

IV. Course Format:

- Lectures will be supplemented with class discussion of cases, audio-visual aids, and participation in experiential triads
- Reading Weeks: February 20th. – 24th.; March 20th. – 24th., 2017
- Last day to submit written work, and file extension petitions is May 8, 2017
- Any extension beyond the deadlines stipulated in this syllabus will need to be filed with the registrar, demonstrating the cause for such

- **Disability:** Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) is in compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student who meets GCTS’ Disability Accommodation Policy criteria, needs to inform Student Life Services in writing about his/her condition. Then, discuss with the course’s professor the logistics pertaining to the disability requiring accommodation.

- **Professor’s Contact:** Dr. Polischuk's box at GCTS is #222; his phone number is (978) 646-4116; his e-mail is Pablo@gordonconwell.edu. He will have available office hours; appointments can be made through the MACO office or consulting with the instructor.

V. Course Requirements
1. **Reading Log.** In order to develop an adequate and solid foundation in clinical counseling, students are expected to read from a variety of sources to complement areas of understanding and be aware of current trends and investigations.

- Books may be chosen from the bibliography attached to this syllabus, or selected by the student as long—as they fall into the categories and issues which are dealt with in the course. In addition to books, journals and monographs may also be utilized, relevant to theory and practice. A **reading log** will be submitted with the following features:
  - Date of each reading
  - Author(s) of the reading material
  - Title of the book, chapter, journal article, date of publication, etc.
  - Number of pages (logging each entry and a cumulative total of the pages read at the end — at the right bottom corner)

- A grade will be assigned to the reading. The expected levels are set at: 2000 pages = A's. At the lower limit, 1000 pages = C's

- Failure to provide the log in this format will result in grade penalties. To be posted on SAKAI, with student’s name, course number, and “Reading Log” title

- If students prefer to e-mail their course work, they should include: Last Name, Course Title, Assignment Title, and Date of delivery

- **Due on May 8, 2017**

- It represents 20% of the final grade.

2. **Observational Feedback Papers:** As the course progresses, the class will have opportunities to practice counseling skills. Students are expected to work in triads, with the following roles to be enacted:

1. **Counselee:** The person presenting a problem. (The problem may be prepared in advance, to be enacted by the counselee)
2. **Counselor:** the person serving as a therapist
3. **Observer:** a person acting as an observer, recording the interaction in terms of expressions, empathy, warmth, concern, objectivity, and any important aspect of the relationship

- Students engaged in such triads will rotate in their roles, as to promote a learning experience of interpersonal nature, from all sides.

- The student acting as the observer of the triad will provide a feedback report on the experience. The elements of the papers include descriptive, critical, and prescriptive aspects. A form is provided, with specific items which, as a whole, serve as a guideline for the assignment and the criteria for grading such. During the course of the semester, students will turn **three observational feedback reports**

- A guideline is provided with several observational, experiential, and personal learning categories to be addressed. A grading criteria is provided, applicable to these

- The papers will not exceed five (5) pages, single spaced, 12 pt. font

- These observational reports will be due in class, **the week after** the experiential triad session has taken place

- These papers represent 25% of the final grade
3. A case presentation — based upon the practical experience gathered from the experiential or practical triads conducted during the course. Such feedback paper should reflect the aspects of the case counseled, with descriptive information (database for chief complaints, the history leading to present problems, the symptomatology, social/family and personal data) on the counselee. Also, based upon such, the paper should reflect analytical or interpretative aspects of the mental status, the formulation of the case from a given theoretical perspective (psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioral, systemic), and an impression or probable diagnosis of the case. Besides, the disposition and choice of treatment modality and the approach utilized need to be stated. Finally, a personal statement about the experience in general, reflecting personal learning, should be included

- A guideline is provided in order to facilitate the writing of the case: It includes the person’s identification, chief complaint, history of the problem; personal / family / social / etc. history; mental status; formulation; impression/diagnosis; disposition.
- The paper is limited to ten (10) pages, double-spaced, in APA style, plus a bibliography.
- Due on: May 3, 2017
- It represents 25% of the final grade

4. Final exam: A final take-home exam will be given the week prior to exam week (April 25, 2017)
- The exam will be of varied elements: Multiple choices, T/F, and short answers.
- Its content is gathered from the clinical skills and strategies covered in the textbook, and the class presentations/discussions
- The exam will be closed book/closed/shut-off means of helps of any sorts
- The exam will be returned on May 3, 2017
- It will represent 30% of the final grade

Grading:

- As gathered from the above requirements/assignments, the final grade (100%) will consist of the sum total of Observational reports (25%); Case Presentation (30%); Exam (25%); and Reading Log (20%).
VI. Course Outline and Class Schedules

1. Introduction to the course: Strategies and skills applicable to therapeutic theories and concepts. Listening and responding skills: Listening with empathy, congruence, genuineness, and unconditional regard for the person. Responding with reflective, inquiring, supportive, confronting, interpretative, and guiding modes. Application of theory: Demonstrating knowledge of and ability to apply theory to practice (case conceptualization and development of counseling plans). Application of research/professional literature: Using information from professional literature in the formation of case conceptualization, development of counseling plans, and selection of interventions.

Developing as a professional counselor — defined in terms of identity, ethical stances, efficacy in employing skills and strategies, and boundaries. Relatedness to other professionals — peers, supervisors, trainees — and to agencies. Diverse approaches, practices, and skills to be used in the practice of individual, couple, family, and group counseling. Ethical standards applicable to Mental Health and Marriage and Family counselors (covered in CO790, reinforced here).

Formation of therapeutic, experiential triads: to practice listening skills, as well as to observe the process of counseling, by means of experiential encounters/observational learning.

2. Assessment issues: Skills in gathering data, appraisal of symptoms, history taking, leading to definitions of problems and chief complaints. Assessment of the mental status of clients, their personality features, defenses, and potentials. Formulation of cases, diagnosis, and disposition. Bottom-up empirical process in gathering data, and top-down synthetic, abstracting processes in formulating cases and diagnosing. Writing case notes: clarity, reflecting on the work being done. Cultural competence. Demonstration of the ability to attend to cultural issues that may influence the counselee’s issues and/or resolution of those issues as well as how the counselor’s own cultural background and worldview may influence case conceptualization and development of counseling plans. Counseling Plans: Developing effective counseling plans, based on diagnostic impressions, and goals agreed on with clients.

3. Psychoanalytic-Psychodynamic Skills: Gathering data, promoting free associations; delving into primary processes; intersubjective awareness: working with transference; awareness of counter-transference. Interpretation and its effects—timing, accuracy, biases, cultural aspects. Assessment skills: Identification of counselee's themes, issues, problems. Formulation of diagnostic impressions and articulation of how these are reached.

4. Reading week


6. Adlerian strategies and skills in counseling.
Non-directive, Socratic skills; open-ended questions, inquiry.


9. Reading Week


VII. Bibliography


