

**GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**CO 500**

**INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELING**

**Fall Term 2010**

**Mondays 9:15-12:15 A.M.**

**Professor: Pablo Polischuk, Ph.D.**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this course are that the student will:

1. Develop a sound foundational understanding of therapeutic counseling theories.
2. Develop basic skills required for the optimization of the counseling relationship. Evaluation, assessment, disposition and selection of modalities, and the development of the therapeutic work are perceived to be the core aspects of the course.
3. Get acquainted with different models of intervention, with approaches and techniques which are most effective, derived from various schools of thought.
4. Develop an understanding of the integration of psychological and theological concepts, processes and structures operative in a whole-person approach.

**COURSE FORMAT**

1. The course meets once a week for a period of three hours.
2. The presentation of theory, concepts and research in the domain of counseling will be complemented with the elaboration of models and approaches. More specific attention will be given to search for relevance and application of salient features of various paradigms. Practical refinements and group participation in the development of counseling skills are seen as desirable developments in class.
3. Students will participate in "counseling triads" on a weekly basis. The times to engage in such activity must be arranged as necessary: Part of the third hour of each week, plus extra time as to allow one hour of practice among all participants.

## TEXT BOOKS:

The textbooks required for the course are the following:

Corsini, R. J. and Wedding, D. (2008). *Current psychotherapies*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Canada: Brooks/Cole.

Corsini & Wedding. (2008). *Case studies in Psychotherapy*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). NY: Wadsworth Publishing.

Specific chapters will be assigned in preparation for the topics listed in the syllabus. The book is a foundational one and should be read in its entirety. It summarizes the major approaches and allows for further inquiry into other sources.

### 2. **Added Recommendations**

The following are recommended as collateral readings:

Collins, G. (2007). *Christian counseling: A comprehensive guide*. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ed. Revised and updated. Thomas Nelson.

Egan, G. (2006). *The Skilled Helper: A problem management and opportunity development approach to helping* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thomson.

Smith, D. (1990). *Integrative therapy*. Grand Rapids: Baker House.  
A comprehensive approach to the methods and principles of counseling and psychotherapy from a Christian perspective.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. **Reading and Reporting** (20% of the grade)

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 they may be 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:

- a. Author(s)
- b. Title of the book, chapter, journal article, etc.
- c. Number of pages read (per entry and cumulative total)

Such **reading log** will accompany an **annotated bibliography** with the condensed statements about the readings, with the customary format for such requirement: Author, title of the book/chapter/article (if journal), publisher, and date of publication.

A grade will be assigned to the reading. The expected levels are set at: 2000 pp. = A's. At the lower limit, 1000 pp. = C's. **Due on November 29, 2010.**

2. **Papers** (First paper 40% and second paper 20% of the grade)

Two papers are required for this course.

a. The first paper (midterm) is on the subject of a major approach in the area of counseling (psychodynamic, non-directive, cognitive-behavioral, etc.). This is a research paper in which you will demonstrate your understanding of the subject matter in terms of theory and investigation. It is expected a critique and personal input, beyond descriptive statements. The paper is limited to ten to twelve (10-12) double-spaced pages plus a bibliography reflecting current theory and its application in clinical endeavors. Rendered in APA style. Due on **November 1, 2010.**

b. The second paper is based upon your practical experience at the counseling/clinical setting. If no practicum experience is available during the semester, the substitution of the "therapeutic triad" experience is accepted. It should reflect aspects of a case, with database for chief complaints, the history leading to present problems, symptoms, social/family and personal data on the counselee, attempts at a diagnosis, mental status, formulation of a dynamic nature, descriptive aspects of the course of treatment, the approach utilized, and an impression on the experience in general. The paper may include aspects of transference/counter transference as well as supervisory experiences. The paper is limited to six (6) pages, double-spaced, APA style, and is due on **November 29, 2010.**

3. **Counseling Practice Feedback Papers** (20% of the grade)

As the course progresses, the class will have opportunities to practice counseling skills. Times have to be arranged either before or after class for such purpose. Students are expected to divide in triads, with the following roles to be enacted:

- a. Counseled the person presenting a problem. (The problem may be prepared in advance, to be enacted by the counselee).
- b. Counselor= the person serving as a therapist.
- c. 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.

People in such triads will rotate in their roles, as to allow for a learning experience from all sides. The observer will provide a feedback report on the experience (a form is provided, which serves as a guideline for the assignment). The feedback report is due the class session following the experience. It is expected that a total of three feedback reports will be turned in by each observer over the course of the term.

Debriefing is an important part of such counseling experiences. It is recommended that before the conclusion of such experiences, both counselee and observer provide feedback to the counselor in order to enhance insight and skills.

## CO 500 -INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELING

### SESSION: TOPIC:

1. Introduction to the course.  
Therapeutic concepts and skills  
Formation of triads  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 1.
2. The counseling process  
Therapeutic alliance. Helping to define and clarify problems  
Data gathering, focusing on symptoms, history  
Mental status examination. From data gathering to diagnosis  
**Reading:** Egan Chapters 1-3.
3. Contributions from Psychoanalytic theory  
Psychoanalytically-oriented therapy and approaches  
Themes, transitions, defenses; transference and countertransference.  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 2.
4. Variations on analytical work  
Analytical, Adlerian approaches  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 3 & 4.
5. Rogerian, non-directive approaches  
Phenomenological-existential approaches  
Meaning, attributions, relevance and purpose  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 5
6. Behavioral/cognitive strategies  
Principles of behavior modification; contract therapy  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 7
7. Cognitive therapy  
Rational-emotive approaches  
Cognitive-behavioral approaches  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 6
8. Interventions along cognitive-behavioral therapy  
Anxiety, depression and other treatments  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapters 8 & 10.
9. Current trends in socio-bio-psychology

Post modern and narrative approaches in therapy

**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapter 9

10. Christian approaches: Biblical anthropology and theological themes  
Integrative models. Utilizing spiritual resources  
Review and Conclusions  
**Reading:** Corsini & Wedding Chapters 13 & 14.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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