I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course deals with psychological, theological and practical foundations for the practice of marital therapy. A review of major theories within the framework of contemporary approaches is presented. Also, opportunities for the development and practice of therapeutic skills in assessment, evaluation and treatment of couples are provided.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To consider major psychological, biblical and theological aspects of marriage.

2. To understand and evaluate a variety of strategies and techniques utilized in effective marriage counseling.

3. To consider a range of constructive programs that are designed to prepare and enrich the marital relationship. Aspects of pre-marital therapy will be focused upon.

4. To provide experiential components in the conduct of marital therapy in an effort to provide the student an appreciation of the various techniques and strategies involved.

III. TEXTBOOKS

Required:


IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate actively. Students will discuss all absences with the instructor. Students will complete all reading and other assignments ON TIME. Discuss all late assignments with the instructor. One point will be deducted from all late
assignments per day late (including the weekend) and will not be accepted more than 1 week late.

1. **READING**

   **Reading log:** Read 2,000 pages. Reading materials may be selected from the bibliography provided, or from other appropriate resources, which relate to marriage therapy. In addition, audio/videotapes may be utilized with an equivalence of pages: time (i.e. 20pp/hr.). Equivalence is to be noted on the reading log. The reading log will consist of the author, book/chapter/journal/article/tape/video, with the corresponding publisher, date of publication and pages with a final total number listed.

   This assignment represents 20% of the grade (20 points). Due: **December 17, 2013**.

   *You can earn 5 points or 500 pages by attending the ALL-DAY No Place of Abuse conference on domestic violence on September 28, 2013 See [www.gordonconwell.edu/NoPlaceforAbuse](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/NoPlaceforAbuse)*

2. **FINAL EXAM**

   Given on **December 13** to be returned **December 17**. It represents 30% of the grade (30 points).

3. **WRITTEN WORK**

   a. **Term paper:** Based on a major approach to marital therapy.

      Beyond descriptive tones, an analysis/critique and adoption of a major theoretical approach in marital therapy, with the provision of a rationale for such choice. The main body of the paper will be 12 (twelve) pages in length, plus bibliographic references (APA style). It represents 30% of the grade (30 points). Due: **December 6, 2013**.

   b. **5 Observations of role-playing experiential exercises. (20% of the grade—20 points-4 points each)**. Five written observer reports will comprise the experiential aspect of the course. Use the format at the end of the syllabus. Each report is due the class period following the role-playing situations.

      The class will be divided into marital counseling practice groups, with a “couple,” a counselor, and an observer. The “couple” will dramatize specific marital themes and issues, which they will choose. The observer will debrief the role-play by providing verbal feedback and will complete the observer report.

**CO 716 COURSE OUTLINE**


September 20 Theoretical orientations in marital therapy. Approaches in marital therapy.

*Turn in observation #1*
September 27 More approaches in marital therapy

October 4 Jim Stout, MDiv, DMin, on Mental Illness and Marriage
**Turn in observation #2**

October 11 Premarital counseling; Chuck Slagen, Ph.D. on Prepare/Enrich; Getting started: Establishing a therapeutic alliance and assessment.

*October 18 First Reading Week*
*Continue observations*

October 25 Communication in marriage: PREP
**Turn in observation #3**

November 1 Gottman and conflict in marriage. Intervention strategies

November 8 Attachment theory and Emotionally-Focused therapy.
**Turn in observation #4**

*November 15 Second Reading Week*
*Complete last observation and begin term paper*

November 22 Issues: Domestic violence, Affairs, Separation, Divorce, Remarriage
**Turn in observation #5**

*November 29 Thanksgiving holiday*
*Complete term paper*

December 6 Intimacy in marriage. Enhancement, termination and referral. Case discussion.
**Turn in Term Paper**

December 13 Pick up final exam and turn it in December 17

December 17 Last day to submit to Registrar (not to instructor) extension requests for coursework if needed. Let the instructor know if you are applying for an extension.
**Turn in Final Exam**
**Turn in Reading Log**

**Resources**


Please: Consult the Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy – Wiley Interscience/American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, for relevant, updated artic
1. Summarize briefly the counseling session: How did it begin? What were the main issues? What was the state of the couple?

2. Describe the conduct of the counseling session. Include attention to non-verbal cues, themes and transitions. Any particular difficulties encountered in the process? Flow, movement, blocks, etc.

3. Describe to the best of your abilities the levels of a) empathy; b) acceptance and regard; c) accurate feedback; d) tentativeness and/or directness; e) genuineness; f) utilization of the self by the counselor, and g) use of a particular theoretical approach.

4. What would be your formulation of the case using a particular theoretical approach?

5. What did you learn about yourself as a counselor as you observed the session?

6. What suggestions did you share with the counselor during the debriefing session?