Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary

INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING
July 20-24, 2015
Barcelona, Spain
Professor: Pablo Polischuk, Ph.D.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are that the student will:

1. Develop a sound foundational understanding of pastoral counseling basis and procedures.

2. Get acquainted and familiarize with diverse models utilized in pastoral care and counseling: Crisis intervention, chronic situations, and attention to problems of personal, interpersonal and situational nature.

3. Develop basic skills required for the optimization of the counseling Process: Assessment, impression, disposition and counsel given.

4. Develop an understanding of the integration of biblical, theological and psychological concepts, processes and structures operative in a whole-person approach.

COURSE FORMAT

1. The course meets daily for a week for two periods of three hours, from 8:30 AM to 12:00 noon, and from 1:30 PM until 4:30 PM.

2. The presentation of counseling theory, concepts and research in the domain of will be complemented with the investigation 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 daily basis. Part of the third hour of each class period will be utilized for such practice among all participants.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

The textbook required for the course are the following:


Additional recommended readings may be drawn from:


**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)

Depending on the number of pages and time spent in reading for the course, a grade will be assigned to the reading. **Due on:** August 21, 2015

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

Two papers are required for this course.

a. The first paper is based upon your practical experience drawn from the triads or practical experience during the course. Due on August 3, 2015

b. The second paper is on the subject of a major problem encountered in pastoral care, and a given approach in the area of pastoral counseling. 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 your understanding of the process of pastoral counseling. **Due on:** August 21, 2015

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

As the course progresses, the class will have opportunities to practice counseling skills. Students are expected to divide in triads, with the following roles to be enacted:

a. Counselee: The person presenting a problem. (The problem may be prepared in advance, to be enacted by the counselee).

b. Counselor= The person providing counsel.

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 process.

Students 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). 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 insights and skills.

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Day TOPIC:

1. Introduction to the course.  
   Biblical basis for counseling  
   Formation of triads
   The counseling process: Helping to define and clarify problems  
   Data gathering, focusing on symptoms, history  
   From data gathering to impression/working diagnosis

2. The counseling process: Attentive listening skills  
   Empathy, positive regard, congruency  
   Responding with empathy and accuracy
   Approaches and strategies in crisis situations  
   Behavioral/cognitive aspects  
   Guidance and supportive work

3. Approaches and strategies in pastoral counseling  
   Grief counseling. Dealing with suffering
   Counseling those who suffer from depression
4. Counseling those who suffer from anxiety
   Counseling those who suffer with stress and PTSD

5. The New Covenant as a Paradigm
   Relationships as focus of counseling
   Couples, families and church members in conflict
   Dynamic and behavioral aspects

   Integrative models
   Spiritual guidance
   Review and Conclusions

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


