Course Syllabus

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Office: GCTS Room 213
Phone: (704) 295-2358
Class Times: June 10-11; July 8-9; July 29-30
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Office Hours: Tu, Th, F 1:30-4:00 pm or by appt.

Course Description:
This course is intended to introduce students to family systems theory and the application of the various family systems models to counseling. A number of theoretical models will be reviewed and students will gain knowledge of each model’s assumptions, methods, strengths, and weaknesses. Additionally each model will be evaluated in relation to various biblical/theological understandings of the purpose and functioning of families.

Gordon Conwell Mission
Article 2: To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines. Theological education, which is properly done within and for the Church, ought to function with rigor and academic integrity. The seminary, therefore, must provide an environment within which teaching and learning can best occur and encourage high levels of scholarly competence and research in its faculty.

Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry. The Church and the seminary share the goal of seeing knowledge, skills and experience integrated in the person who ministers. Through the courses and the practica/internships, a combination of careful training and supervised experience in counseling ministries are pedagogical practices essential to achieving that goal.

MACC Department Mission: The aim of the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling Program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary-Charlotte is to advance Christ’s kingdom in various clinical, educational, and ministry settings by equipping counselors to think theologically, live biblically, and engage globally. Students who think theologically will develop a professional counselor identity that is grounded in orthodox Christian theology and sound clinical practice. Students who live biblically will demonstrate congruence between their faith and their actions in their personal and professional lives by maintaining a commitment to the process of ongoing spiritual formation. Students who engage globally will fulfill their call to serve others by being sensitive and responsive to the needs of diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic populations.
Relation to Curriculum: Family Systems Theory is a required course for students in the MACC program who are pursuing LPC and MFT licensure. The course is designed to provide students with the opportunity to gain an understanding of family therapy. It is designed to help students learn how to engage in treating mental and emotional needs in a family system. The course will provide students with the opportunity to engage in role plays that will assist in the process. The curriculum of Family Systems Theory is an area that is emphasized as a content area on many state licensing boards, including the North Carolina LPC and MFT Boards and also various accrediting bodies, including CACREP.

Objectives (Knowledge and Skills Outcomes): Students will develop knowledge and understanding and consider theoretical approaches when providing career counseling to individuals. The following standards and outcomes will be used to measure knowledge and skills:

CACREP Standards
1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies (G.2. d)
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding that will allow them to explain a systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions (G.5.e)

CMHC Standards
Students will address and explain how they recognize the importance of family, social networks, and community systems in the treatment of mental and emotional disorders. (C.8)

Course Content: Family Systems Theory introduces students to various theoretical approaches in the utilization of Family Therapy. Attention will be given to providing clinical services to family systems and couples. Additionally, consideration will be given to the importance of considering diversity issues when working with families and couples. Counseling skills will further be developed when engaging in role play with families, to consider how to serve a family system given the background and theoretical considerations.

Methods of Instruction: To achieve the objectives of this course and address the course content, the instructor will employ a variety of teaching interventions that will include small group discussions, lectures, role-plays, presentations and discussion of movies related to family therapy.

Required Texts and/or Readings


Objectives (Knowledge and Skills Outcomes):
Students will develop knowledge and understanding and consider theoretical approaches when providing career counseling to individuals. The following standards and outcomes will be used to measure knowledge and skills:

Course Requirements/Assignments
A. Course Requirements:
1. Students will engage in reading and developing extensive library of a variety of systems perspective that provides an understanding of family and other systems theories and major models of family and related interventions. (G.5.e)
2. Students will demonstrate personal awareness of own family dynamics by developing a genogram and writing about family make-up in own personal growth and development as a way of gaining understanding of families will provide family therapy services. (G. 5. e, C-8)
3. Students will become conversant with the individual, couple, family group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including becoming sensitive to multicultural issues and developing multicultural competencies in working with family systems (G.2. d, C-8)
4. Students will demonstrate in writing and a case presentation the recognition of the importance of family, social networks, and community systems ways to address the treatment of mental and emotional disorders. (C-8)
5. Students will integrate acquired knowledge and understanding of family systems and demonstrate how that knowledge can be applied to practical situations in practicum and professional experience, and integrate specific principles of biblical Christian standards related to family systems.

Students are expected to complete ALL assignments for the course. Any assignment not completed will result in a grade deduction from final grade in the course.

B. Assignments: Knowledge and Skill Outcomes:
1. Personal Family Genogram (55 points): The student will develop a genogram of own with a minimum of three generations that includes great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and included yourself. If students can obtain or know information about generations after the great-grandparents this should be included in the genogram history. In Sakai there is posted information that gives information about all the aspects of making a genogram. Additionally, an example of a genogram will be shown in class. After completing the genogram the student should evaluate and briefly interpret the family genogram relationships by writing about and answering questions on the handout that is included in Sakai resource section. **Students should submit a HARD COPY of their genogram the second weekend of class (July 8-9, 2016), and a 2-3-page paper that responds to questions that will be handed out. The paper should be a hard copy submitted with the genogram.** (G. 5. e, C-8)

DUE DATE: July 8-9, 2016 in class.

2. Required Reading Assignment (100 points) --The student will be expected to read all three of the required textbooks in their entirety and write a 10-12-page paper that
explains, from the authors’ views, the importance of family therapy in treating the mental and emotional needs in a family system. Students should explain why family therapy is a necessary treatment approach to consider. Additionally, the student will select from one of the scenarios below and identify a specific treatment modality that is addressed in the textbooks that could be utilized in working with the family. Students should address how they will work with the family to help them deal with the identified problem. The students will address how they would use the identified modality and specific interventions that could be used while working with the family in therapy. Students should explain how they would go about incorporating different treatment modalities. The student should include the goals that will be focused on while working with the family. Additionally, students should consider and identify any community systems or social networks that the family can utilize as they develop healthy ways of engaging with one another. Explain the reasons for selecting the specific community systems and/or social networks and how they can specifically serve or benefit the family. Identify multicultural issues that you would need to be mindful of in working with the family. Address what makes these issues important to be considered for your as you work with the family. Also, address how your own values could manifest and need to be addressed while working with the family. Finally, students should address from a biblically integrated perspective how they would consider the case theoretically, whether the family is Christian or not. (G.2.d., G.5.e., C-8)

**Family #1 Scenario:**
Jim (33) and Julie (30) have been married for eight years. They both are employed in professional jobs (Jim owns and manages a high end restaurant and Julie is a branch manager at a bank.) They have three children who are 7 and 6 year old twins. Julie had been a stay at home mom, until the twins were old enough to start first grade. She has been working for one full year and has really been struggling with feeling like a single mom. She complains that Jim is hardly ever home and never available to transport to kids to their many activities that they are involved in on the weekends. Julie says that they have been arguing for the past 6-7 months, but the arguing has intensified in that during the last three to four months they are arguing now nonstop. The arguments over the past few months have almost always happened either in front of the children or at least within earshot. Julie has been called into school on two occasions recently because their oldest, 7-year-old Jack, has pushed or hit children in two of his classes. At home Jack fights constantly with the twin brothers, Joey and Jacey by pushing them, yelling at them and hitting them. Julie has finally told Jim, “You need to make time to go to therapy with me and the boys, or I’m leaving and taking them with me and will sue you for alimony.”

**Family #2 Scenario:**
Marcus (42) and Marcia (41) have been married for 18 years. Marcus is a college professor and Marcia is an obstetrics nurse. They have 4 children: 16-year-old Madison, 14-year-old Morgan, 12-year-old Mason and 9-year-old Mitchell. The family has always been close to one another, with the exception of Madison. Since anyone on the family can remember, she has always been distant from the family. Marcus and Marcia indicate that when she was young she never really demonstrated any closeness or need for closeness with them. They said that when she started grade school she was a loner and never really had any close friends. They say, that unlike her, the three younger boys all have really good friends, and are loving and engaging kids. The boys
are all close with each other, but do not really feel close to Madison. The family has always struggled with her being willing to join the family on vacations, family nights out or in and even sitting with the family at dinner and talking about how they are doing. Madison never shares anything personal about what is going on with her and as soon as she has finished eating dinner she asks to be excused. She has recently started arguing with her parents about why she even needs to come to dinner with them. She says she is old enough to fix her own food and eat when she wants. Additionally, Marcus has caught Madison attempting to sneak out of the house on three occasions, after midnight. The police recently contacted them because Madison was picked up with two other children for underage drinking and using marijuana. She has a court appearance scheduled. Finally, her parents have been scheduled for a parent teacher conference, as they have learned that Madison has been skipping school for the past month and is at risk of failing several of her classes.

**Family #3 Scenario**

Keirstin is a 37-year-old divorced dad who is raising his 10-year-old son, Kyle, and 7-year-old daughter Kaila. Keirstin’s ex-wife, Karla, is in prison serving and 10 year sentence for child endangerment. When Kyle was 3 years old and Kaila was 14 months old, Karla left the children in the home by themselves while she went out with a friend to “score some drugs.” When she left the house both children were napping. She was gone from the house for at least five hours. Keirstin, who is a lawyer, had been trying to reach Karla since 1:30 pm (which is the time the children took their nap each day) on both the house and cell phones. He just assumed she was out on a play date and just did not have her phone nearby. He came home from work at approximately 6:30 and found both children crying in their bedrooms. For the next hour he continued to try to reach Karla, to no avail. Finally, he called the police and reported the incident. At 10:00 pm Karla came home and was immediately placed under arrest. She had additionally charges filed for possession of a controlled substance (she had 8 ounces of marijuana in her possession). She also was given a breathalyzer and was also charged with a DWI, as her blood alcohol level of 0.14, which is well above the legal limit to drive. Upon her arrest, Keirstin filed for a divorce and received full custody of the children when she went to prison. Kyle to this day has a difficult time being left alone, and until he was six years old would cry uncontrollably when Keirstin would leave to go out for an evening, and leave the children with a babysitter. Keirstin has been dating Corrie for the past year and has been talking with the children about the possibility of getting married to her. Kyle is vehemently opposed to his father marrying someone else, and feels that the family is just fine with the three of them. Kaila indicates that she likes Corrie and would like to have a “mommy.” Kyle will remind her that the last mom they had she went off and left them alone and he does not want another mom who will do that same thing.

**Family #4 Scenario**

Wally and Wanda have been married for 18 years and have two children, one boy, William (15) and one girl, Wenita (16). Wally and Wanda are both doctors and started a practice together after they got married. They both have 50/50 ownership of the business and both have thriving practices as family medicine doctors. For the past 18 months Wally and Wanda have been sleeping in separate rooms in their homes. They do not let the children see them go to separate bedrooms, but they know the children are aware of the tension between the two of them. They rarely talk to each other, and instead opt to have conversations with the opposite sexed child.
about things going on in the home, and even in their personal lives. So, Wally will often talk to Wenita about the things going on in his personal life and Wanda will talk with William about things going on in her personal life. The children have tried to get their parents to talk to each other, but each attempt has been met with some excuse from their parents. Finally, over dinner one evening both William and Wenita told their parents that they thought the family needed to start learning how to deal with their problems and the best way they could think to do that was by going to see a family therapist. Wally and Wanda initially resisted the idea, until they begin to learn from separate conversations with their children that they were feeling like they were being pushed to dislike the other parent. Wally and Wanda finally told the children that they would go to family therapy, but they wanted the children to know what was going on before going in and hearing it in therapy. Wally admitted that he had been having an emotional relationship with one of the nurses at the office. He said that he had been talking with her a lot about things that were going on in his life, and she happened to mention it to Wanda. He said that Wanda got really upset and stopped talking with him. Wanda further stated that she subsequently got involved with another doctor in the practice and began having a sexual relationship with him. Wally indicated that when he found out about the affair then he slept with the nurse. They told the children that these affairs happened almost two years ago. They said that they did not want to end the marriage because of the kids, and so they both stopped seeing the other person. However, Wally said that he could not forgive Wanda for actually having sex with another man, when all he had done was talk to the other woman.

The following aspects of the assignment is what the paper will be graded on:
1. Paper written in APA format (1-inch margins, cover page, reference page, double-spaced with headings and subheadings in the paper.
2. Address the authors’ views about family therapy, why it is a necessary treatment modality, and the importance of use in treating mental and emotional difficulties.
3. Address a specific modality that can be utilized in treatment case from one of the scenarios. Include in discussion why specific modality over one of the other modalities.
4. Identify the goals for treatment with the family based on the issues that are noted in the scenario.
5. Based on modality identify specific interventions that can be implemented with the family.
6. Address and identify specific community systems or social networks that can be utilized in treating the family and helping them to develop healthy ways of engaging with one another. Explain the reasons for selecting the community system and/or the social networks and how they can benefit the family.
7. Address any multicultural considerations that you need to be mindful of in working with the family.
8. Address areas of your own values that might factor into the treatment that is provided to the family.
9. Address a perspective of biblical integration and a theological way to consider serving the family. Address in your response the biblical integration if the family members are Christians and if they are not Christians.
DUE DATE: This assignment should be submitted electronically on Sakai in the assignment area no later than 11:55 pm on August 13, 2016. Be certain to refer to the Rubric for grading requirements

3. **Class Case Student Role Play: (100 points):** Students are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of one of the family systems theories through role play with a family (made up of classmates) who will be given scenarios to role play with a therapist. Student therapists will be matched with a family with whom they will provide therapy in the counseling lab, which will be observed by the class. The student will return to the classroom and the whole class will discuss the treatment approach, techniques and offer feedback. The student therapist will be given a general overview of the family, prior to the role play and will need to decide treatment modality and utilize any intervention during the role play session. The therapy session with the family will last 20 minutes. Students will write a 2-3-page summary of the therapy experience and address issues of broadly the modality used, why that approach was selected and any cultural and diversity issues to be considered in the case. (G.2.d., G.5.e., C-8)

DUE DATE: Role Plays will begin the 2nd weekend (July 8-9) and will conclude on the 3rd weekend (July 29-30).

**NON-COUNSELING STUDENTS:**
Non-counseling students may opt out of the role play, and instead prepare a research paper on the relevance and application of systems theory to the local church. In the paper the student should specifically identify two approaches that could be used in a church setting by pastoral counselors. This paper will be 8-10 pages, written in APA format, double-spaced, and must include at least five (5) professional references from within the past 5-7 years.

4. **Final Exam: (150 points):** A final exam should be completed for the class. Students should obtain a proctor for the exam, if they will be taking it off campus. The proctor should be someone in a professional position; not a family member or friend, and it should not be taken in your home. Students should send the proctor’s name, email and phone number to Dr. Maclin’s email (vmaclin@gordonconwell.edu). Dr. Maclin will contact the proctor with the username and password in order for the student to take the exam. If the student will take the exam on campus the student should contact Dr. Maclin to schedule a time to take the exam. The exam will cover material from all three texts. Students will receive several multiple-choice questions as a Study Guide from which 100 multiple-choice questions will be selected. There will be two case studies from which students will need to answer short answer questions worth 50 points. (G.2.d., G.5.e., C-8)

DUE DATE: The exam should be taken by August 19, 2016 on Sakai 11:59 pm.

5. **Attendance (45 points) & Participation: (30 points):** Class will meet on Fridays from 6:30 to 9:30 and Saturdays from 8:30 to 4:30 on the following weekends: June 10-11, July 8-9 and July 29-30. Attendance for all class sessions is mandatory. If you are unable to attend all class sessions then the student should contact the instructor and arrange for possible make-up assignments. Tardiness or absences will result in grade deduction if make-up assignment, shown below, is not submitted.
Attendance and full participation is expected during all class meetings. If the student should miss up to two hours of class for any reason, he or she can choose one of the following options to make up for the missed portion of class:

1. Have thirty (30) points deducted from your final course grade or
2. Submit an annotation for 500 pages of reading pertaining to content of material that was covered during the missed class.
3. Submit an assignment related to missed content, which the professor will assign.

The student must notify the professor prior to the absence, explain the reason for the absence and inform the instructor which assignment will be selected to complete. If the student should miss more than two hours of the course he or she should inform the instructor and then meet with the professor to receive the make-up assignment for the missed class.

NOTE: Even though you complete a make-up assignment points will still be deducted for the portion of the class that was missed and from participation points.

Grading:
The final grade will reflect the combined efforts of the student as derived from the following sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genogram &amp; Paper</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required Reading Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Case Role Play</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>150</td>
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</table>

**Total Points Possible** 480

**Grading Rubric**
Final letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>466-480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>418-431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>370-383</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>322-335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>451-465</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>403-417</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>355-369</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>307-321</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>432-450</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>384-402</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>336-354</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>288-306</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>287 and below</td>
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**Grading Writing Assignments**
Lateness of assignments will be penalized 3 points for each day an assignment is late. Excessive or insufficient length will be penalized 5 points per page over/under limits. Failure to use APA format will be penalized up to one letter grade, depending on the errors. Assistance with correct APA format is available online in Counseling Central, under Program Documents (see also [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/)). Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please note the guidelines at [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html).
# Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 10-11</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>Nichols (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Chapters 1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genogram</td>
<td>Yarhouse &amp; Sells (2008)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethics and Legality in Family Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Family Therapy Foundations</strong> (Christian Understandings, Historical Foundations)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Models of Family Therapy</strong> (Bowenian Family Therapy, Structural Family Therapy, Strategic Family Therapy, Psychodynamic Family Therapy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 8-9</td>
<td><strong>Family Therapy Foundations</strong> (Object Relations Family Therapy, Contextual Family Therapy, Solution Focused Oriented Family Therapy, Adlerian Family Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Family Therapy, Narrative Family Therapy, Experiential Family Therapy)</td>
<td>Case Role Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Case Role Presentations</td>
<td><strong>Genogram &amp; Paper Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Genogram &amp; Paper Due</strong></td>
<td>Nichols (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Case Role Play</strong></td>
<td>Chapters 5, 6, 9, 12 &amp; 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 7-8</td>
<td>Integration of Family Theory &amp; Critical Issues</td>
<td>Yarhouse &amp; Sells (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Case Role Play</strong></td>
<td>Chapters 7-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13</td>
<td><strong>Reading Assignment Due</strong></td>
<td>Taibbi (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 19</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
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# 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
Work submitted through Sakai will be returned via Sakai since no hard copies will be turned in. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with any hard copy work submitted if you wish to have it returned.

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 prerequisites 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.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


