Fall 2021

Reformed Theological Seminar: **Course 6PT5350**: Pastoral Counseling

**Course purpose/description**:

*This course is an introduction to the counseling process with an emphasis on counseling from a Christian perspective in a pastoral context. The course will include discussions regarding: the nature of people and problems, the nature of change, definitions of health and maturity, various models and modes of counseling, the phases of counseling, and the role of client and counselor. In addition, material concerning marital counseling, family counseling, and lay counseling in the context of the local church or para-church ministry will be presented. Finally, specific content regarding counseling individuals struggling with anxiety, depression, sexual brokenness and addictions, trauma and betrayal, and suicidal urges will be included. Primary skills addressed in the course include; approaching Scripture to find a framework for understanding and helping people, self-examination, emptiness, listening, assessment, feedback and processing. Participants will engage in small groups for portions of the class to practice some of these skills. Participants should find that they understand their own theology of relationships and change better. They may feel adequately exposed to at least one model of Christian or “Biblical” counseling. These gains could allow a participant to more adequately practice as a novice lay counselor and as a referral agent in the ministry.*

**Required reading:**

**Stringer, Jay. Unwanted. Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO, 2018.**

**Thompson, Curt, M.D. Anatomy of the Soul. Salt River (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.), 2010.**

**Tripp, Paul David. Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands. P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2002.**

**Clark, William W. Notes on Lay Counseling. The Lay Counselor Institute, 2011.**

**Select other handouts.**

**Recommended reading:**

**Yalom, Irwin. Love’s Executioner. Basic Books, New York, 1989.**

**Jones, Stanton L. and Butman, Richard E. Modern Psychotherapies. IVP, Downer’s Grove, IL, 1991.**

**Suggested additional reading:**

**Allender, Dan. Bold Love. NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1992.**

**Crabb, Larry. Understanding People. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1987.**

**Crabb, Larry and Allender, Dan. Encouragement: the Key to Caring . Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984.**

Course will meet Wednesdays from 1pm-4pm at the RTS campus in Tyson’s Corner, VA.

Attendance will be kept. One final paper will be expected on a research topic of your choice. A case discussion, a paper on counseling in the church, and a personal reflection paper will be required and graded. Grades determined by:

Attendance and participation 20%

Personal reflection paper 10%

Paper on “Integrating counseling into the local church” 10%

Case discussion 20%

Final research project (explained in class) 40%

Tentative schedule:

1. 9/1/2021
	1. The goal of counseling
	2. Models of counseling and change
	3. Therapy and theology; categories and narrative

Group one; story work

1. 9/8/2021
	1. Basic dimensions of human nature
	2. The role of environment and development (our “story”) in the change/growth process
	3. Biblical look at “story,” and development
	4. Being *present*:

Group two: story work

1. 9/15/2021
	1. Needs, goals/desires, defense mechanisms and protective strategies (conscious and un)
	2. Case presentations, film clips, personal reflection guidelines (look at your story)
	3. LCI counseling model; 4 stage model
	4. Phase one; assessment, organization and empathy

Group three: story work

1. 9/22/2021
	1. *Listening* theory and skills
	2. Phase two; “tinkering,” experimenting, processing, homework
	3. Advanced empathy; *giving feedback*
	4. “Problems of the moment,” and “processing”

Group four: listening and feedback

1. 9/29/2021 **(reflection paper due**)
	1. Gender theology
	2. Gender identity and attachment theory
	3. Marriage and family model(s) (with counseling implications)
	4. Sexual development
	5. *Theory guided questions*

Group five: gender stories

1. 10/06/2021
	1. Sexual brokenness
	2. Sexual addiction (with counseling implications)
	3. Exposure, conflict, resistance and repentance (with counseling implications)
	4. Discussion of research paper

Group six: gender stories

1. 10/13/2021
	1. Trauma; loss, abuse, neglect, PTSD, complex PTSD
	2. The impact of trauma, loss, on the formation of personality, relational style and life strategy
	3. Shame, guilt, betrayal, ambivalence, etc.

Group seven: trauma stories

1. 10/20/2021
	1. Turning points, “holy encounters,” major changes in the Scriptures
	2. Phase three: major change, turning points, conversions, and callings (with counseling implications)
	3. *Divine provocation and exhortation*

Group six: divine encounters

1. 10/27/2021
	1. Grieving, endings, termination of relationships
	2. Phase four: termination of counseling, celebration
	3. Model summary with implications

Group seven: grief stories

1. 11/3/2021
	1. Anxiety, depression, bi-polar, OCD and other common diagnoses
	2. Marriage and family counseling; a brief look
	3. Revisit: Comparison of this model with other models or approaches
	4. Addictions and addiction counseling
	5. Personality disorders and “extra grace required” people in the church

Group eight: counseling stories

1. 11/10/2021
	1. Feedback, Johari Window,
	2. Conflict and conflict management
	3. Managing conflict in counseling situations
	4. Group work

Group nine: feedback stories

1. 11/17/2021 **(case presentation due)**
	1. Discussing the implications for counseling in the church, ministry models, pastoral counseling
	2. Consideration of recovery programs, lay counseling, small groups, referrals, etc.
	3. Case presentations and personal reflection
	4. The church, the pulpit and counseling ministries

Group eight: brainstorming

1. 12/01/2021 **(counseling in the church paper due today, research papers due in one week)**
	1. Wrap up and Q&A



**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: 6PT5350: Pastoral Counseling

Professor: William W. Clark, PhD

Campus: Washington, D.C.

Date: 07/12/2021

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| **MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes***In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.* *\*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*  | **Rubric*** **Strong**
* **Moderate**
* **Minimal**
* **None**
 | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & written)** | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Minimal | While understanding of essential biblical information is helpful, it is not directly related to this course’s content. |
| **Scripture** | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) | None |  |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Minimal | Applies only to some core principles in biblical counseling.  |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Strong | Course sees or defines counseling as both a significant aspect of sanctification but also implies distinct roles of the Father, Son and Spirit |
| **Worldview**  | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | Course desires to teach that counseling can be governed by a deep understanding and application of the Word of God, and that it is a ministry of the worldwide church, regardless of denomination, to the broader public and addresses obviously significant issues in our societies today. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.) | Moderate | Course is certainly an ecumenical approach though professor comes from a Reformed background. Major emphasis on “truth in love” approach to relationships.  |
| **Pastoral Ministry** | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians. | Strong | Course is designed to impact how a pastor, might view suffering, loss, mental health, conflict in others, and how a pastor might effectively shepherd both other shepherds and their own interactions with individuals within and outside the congregation. The emphasis on lay counseling in this course is designed to expand a pastor’s awareness of what can be offered in the context of the local church for those who are struggling. |