

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
PT6350 – Marriage and Family Counseling  
Winter, 2023

Instructor: John C. Kwasny, Ph.D. (601-519-8423) jkwasny@pearorchard.org

**Course Description:**

This intensive course focuses on the pastoral counselor's vital and challenging work of marriage, family, and parenting counseling. A Biblical understanding of the nature of marriage and family life will be provided, as well as a Biblical approach to solving problems which arise within marriages and families—ranging from basic struggles to more complex issues. Case studies will also be discussed in class for more practical help.

**Required Reading:**

Holmes, J.D. (2019). *Counsel for Couples: A Biblical and Practical Guide for Marriage Counseling*.  
Kellemen, R.W. (2020). *Gospel-Centered Family Counseling*.  
Kostenberger, A. (2012). *Marriage and Family: Biblical Essentials*.  
Tripp, Paul (2016). *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Transform Your Family*.

**Assignments:**

**Reading**

Reading is required and the student will be graded through an honor system method. You will be asked to submit a statement of percentage of reading with your Research Paper.

**Family Influence Reflection Paper**

Write a reflection paper on how you have been impacted by your familial upbringing. Topics to think through in this paper are attitudes towards the gospel and holiness, conflict, finances, love, gender roles, etc. Your paper does not need to address each of these topics and may include other topics—these are simply ideas to prime the pump. *Requirements:* 2-3 pages, double-spaced 12 point typeset with standard margins.

**ELECTRONIC COPIES ONLY.**

*Due: February 3*

**Research Paper**

Write a research paper on one of the following topics.

1. The effects of social media on marriage.
2. The change of gender roles in marriage over the last fifty years.
3. The consequences of divorce on children.
4. The particular problems of the blended family.
5. The impact of substance abuse on marriage and family life.
6. The reasons for the increase of divorce in Christian marriages.
7. The impact of disability on marriage.

8. The characteristics of a dysfunctional family.
9. The challenges of single-parenting.

Other topics will be considered, upon discussion with the professor.

*Requirements:* 6-8 pages, double-spaced 12 point typeset with standard margins. Cite at least five sources, listed at the end of the paper. **ELECTRONIC COPIES ONLY.**

*Due: February 10*

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will take the form of a case study.

### **Grading:**

- 10% - Class Attendance/Participation
- 10% - Percentage of reading completed
- 20% - Family Influence Reflection Paper
- 30% - Research Paper
- 30% - Final Exam

### **Class Schedule and Topics:**

Class will meet Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 3:20 p.m. for one week.

#### **Day 1 (01/9/23)**

1. Theology Matters
2. (Not) Role Playing
3. It's Just Talking and Listening
4. Fighting for Life
5. Forgiveness isn't for Wimps

#### **Day 2 (01/10/23)**

6. Five-Fold Intimacy
7. Sexual Struggles
8. Scarlet Letter
9. Addicted to Self
10. Control Freak

#### **Day 3 (01/11/23)**

11. Spenders and Savers
12. Hopeless and Uncommitted
13. Unequally Yoked
14. Spousal Abuse
15. Divorce and Remarriage

#### **Day 4 (01/12/23)**

16. It's About Time

17. In the Family Way
18. The Empty Nest
19. The Extended Family
20. The Blended Family

**Day 5 (01/13/23)**

21. Parenting Differences
22. Extra Effort Children
23. Not Children Anymore
24. Adopted Children
25. Parenting Alone

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes  
With Mini-Justification**

Course: Marriage and Family Counseling

Professor: John C. Kwasny

Campus: Jackson

Date: 10/1/2022

<b><u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Moderate	The pastoral counselor must be able to articulate a biblical framework of counseling.
<b>Scripture</b>	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.)	Moderate	Pastoral counseling is rooted in a knowledge of Biblical principles concerning man's problems and solutions to those problems.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Reformed theology does impact how a pastor counsels. The WCF addresses some counseling concerns.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Pastors must first counsel themselves biblically!
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Pastoral counseling is to be done from a consistent Biblical world and life view.
<b>Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic</b>	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.)	Strong	Counseling is firmly connected to evangelism. We need to learn how to counsel Christians and non-Christians alike.
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	Pastoral counseling is the centerpiece of the pastoral ministry.
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Pastoral counseling has a public side as we address cultural issues.

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