

**CO5500 Counseling and Helping Relationship Skills**  
**Reformed Theological Seminary**

Summer Session, 2023

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00am – 1:00pm

July 10, 12, 17, 19, 31

August 2, 7, 9, 14, 16

3 credit hours

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Office hours: By appointment

**Course Description**

This course provides both a conceptual overview and systematic training in foundational helping skills, i.e., active listening, essential interviewing, case-conceptualization, and consultation skills. Course content will centrally focus on both (a) An evidence-based, three-stage model of behavior change and the rudimentary helping skills incorporated in that model, and (b) An evidence-based understanding of effective counselor behavioral characteristics. Course concepts and skills will be considered, critiqued, and utilized from the perspective of a biblical worldview. Also, these helping skills and effective counselor behaviors will be considered in terms of both face-to-face and technology-assisted helping relationships. Core ethical issues (confidentiality, therapist competence, client consent, collaboration, and multicultural competence) will be introduced commensurate with topics and skills addressed. In addition to course lecture and class discussion, a social skills training approach will be employed to define, demonstrate, and afford ample practice and feedback of specified helping skills via small-group training (skills practice groups). The skills practice group lab component will take place outside of the classroom but during regularly scheduled class hours.

**Course Objectives: (CO) Knowledge Outcomes**

**CO1-11.** For students to demonstrate (via Assignments elaborated below) comprehension of:

- CO1.** An overarching theory and model of counseling (the “Three-Stage Model” of Exploring, Understanding, and Acting) and the essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills which facilitate each of those stages. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, b, g)
- CO2.** A detailed consideration of active listening aspects of interviewing and counseling skills used primarily (not exclusively) in early stages of the Three Stage Model (attending and responding skills, including their sub-skills). (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.c, g, n)
- CO3.** Current research on behavioral characteristics of effective counselors, i.e., the nature of therapeutic relationships/therapeutic alliance and their relation to client outcome. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, c, f, g, n)

- CO4.** The nature and relevant examples of evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention and how the elements of active listening and understanding-stage skills are related. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, b, c, f, g, j; 5.C.3.b)
- CO5.** An ongoing theological critique of the presented counseling models, counselor skills and characteristics from a traditional (Reformed) biblical perspective. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, d, e, f, g, n)
- CO6.** The historical development and philosophical underpinnings of the Three Stage Model *vis a vis* other theories and models of counseling. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, b, f, g, j)
- CO7.** The initial process of developing one's own model of counseling. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, b, j, n)
- CO8.** How to develop client outcome measures, especially in later stages of the Three Stage Model. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, b, i, j)
- CO9.** An introduction and overview of core ethical concepts (confidentiality, client consent, multicultural competence, and the impact of technology on relationships and the counseling process). (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.a, d, e, f, n)
- CO10.** How the Three Stage Model applies to a systems conceptualization of clients, i.e., couples and families as well as to organizations. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.b, c, n)
- CO11.** How the Three Stage Model applies to theories and models of consultation in various settings. (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.b, c, n)

#### **Course Objectives: [CO] Skill Outcomes**

**CO12-16.** For students to demonstrate facility using designated helping skills via their performance in small-group training (Triad group) exercises. These objectives address essential interviewing and counseling skills (CACREP Standards 2.F.5.f, g)

**CO12.** Attending: physically, observing, listening.

**CO13.** Consistent and accurate responding to content.

**CO14.** Consistent and accurate responding to feeling.

**CO15.** Consistent and accurate responding to meaning.

**CO16.** The effective use of open questions and understanding and acting-stage skills.

#### **Methods of Instruction**

This course will be taught via four primary methods:

1. Classroom lecture and discussion.
2. Reading reflections and video-based exams.
3. In-class professor-lead experiential exercises designed to illustrate lecture points and designated fundamental helping skills.
4. Structured counseling/helping skill practice in on-going skills practice groups.

### **Assignments (Student Performance Evaluation Criteria)**

#### **A1. Midterm and Final Exam: 50% (25% each) of final grade**

There will be two exams. Each exam will consist of a series of video clips demonstrating well- and/or poorly conducted counseling skills. Multiple choice questions will accompany each clip requiring students to identify which counseling skills are being demonstrated and whether they are well and/or poorly conducted. The exams will cover all the counseling skills covered in the lectures to that date. Exams will be taken on Canvas. See the course schedule for the exam dates.

#### **A2. Reading Reflections: 25% of final grade**

For each assigned chapter of reading, students will write brief, thoughtful responses answering the provided questions. Use the APA template provided on Canvas for writing this paper.

#### **A3. Skills Practice Groups and Evaluations: 25% of final grade (KPI)**

Students will attend five skills practice groups as per the Course Process and Schedule (during normal class-meeting times). The professor will assign students to groups. These group experiences will be supervised by counselors from the community and will consist of structured target-skill practice exercises. Each designated target-skill will be operationally defined and will serve as a foundation for the subsequent skills to be learned.

These target skills are readily achievable with applied practice. Therefore, student attendance to skills practice groups is essential and expected unless extreme circumstances occur. Missing two skills practice groups will result in course failure. Skill demonstration/achievement will be rated by skills practice groups leaders via the “Skill Practice Groups Rating Scale” at the end of the course.

Skills Practice Groups Grading: **S** (Satisfactory) or **U** (Unsatisfactory).

A grade of **S** is required for successful course completion.

A grade of **S** is given for an overall Likert-rating mean score of 3 or above.

#### **A.4 Course Evaluation (0% of grade but required for course completion)**

Course evaluations are crucial for assessing and improving the MAC program. Therefore, each MAC course includes an assignment to complete an anonymous online course evaluation. Students will verify whether they have completed the evaluation through a Canvas quiz. This will not count toward your grade but is necessary for successful completion of the course.

### **Required Course Materials**

**M1.** Sbanotto, E. A. N., Gingrich, H. D., & Gingrich, F. C. (2016). *Skills for effective counseling: A faith-based integration*. Intervarsity. ISBN: 978-0-8308-2860-9

**M2.** Scott, D., Royal, C., Kissinger, D. (2015). *Counselor as consultant*. CA: Sage. You will be reading chapters 1-2, and it is available on Canvas.

## Course Process and Schedule

Lecture #	Class Date	Lecture Content	CACREP Standard	Material	Assignments	Skills Practice
L1	7/10	Course introduction. Distinctives of Christian counseling. Theology and counseling. Philosophical underpinnings and overview of the Three Stage Model. Ethics regarding of helping skills. Exploring-Stage skills. Perceiving, attending, and listening.	2.F.5a, b, c, d, f, j, n 5.C.3.b	M1. Chs. Introduction, 1-2		
L2	7/12	Exploring-Stage skills. Reflecting content and acknowledgements.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Chs. 3-4	A2. Reading reflections for M1. Chs.1 & 2 <i>due</i>	
L3	7/17	Exploring-Stage skills. Understanding feelings. Reflecting feelings and meaning.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Chs. 5-6	A2. Reading reflections for M1. Chs. 3 & 4 <i>due</i>	A3. Skills practice group 1
L4	7/19	Exploring-Stage skills. Empathic reflection. Validating and normalizing comments.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Chs. 7-8		
	7/21				A2. Reading reflections for M1. Chs. 5 & 6 <i>due</i>	
L5	7/31	Exploring-Stage skills. Silence. Integrating Exploring-Stage skills.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Chs. 9-10		A3. Skills practice group 2
L6	8/2	Understanding-Stage skills. Clarifying: closed and open questions; content vs. process questions.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Ch. 11	A2. Reading reflections for M1. Chs. 7 & 8 <i>due</i>	A3. Skills practice group 3
	8/4				A2. Reading reflections for M1. Chs. 9 & 10 <i>due</i>	
L7	8/7	Understanding-Stage skills. Intuitive empathy and using metaphor	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Ch. 12	A1. Midterm <i>open</i>	
L8	8/9	Understanding-Stage skills. Confronting and interpretation.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Ch. 13	A1. Midterm <i>due</i> by 11:59pm A2. Reading reflections for M1. Ch. 11 <i>due</i>	A3. Skills practice group 4
	8/11				A2. Reading reflections for M1. Ch. 12 <i>due</i>	
L9	8/14	Understanding-Stage skills. Self-disclosure and immediacy.	2.F.5a, c, f, g, n	M1. Ch. 15		
L10	8/16	Acting-Stage skills. Measuring outcome. Consulting. Technology and helping skills	2.F.5a, c, e, f, g, h, i, n 5.C.3.b	M1. Ch. 16 M2. Chs. 1-2	A1. Final exam <i>Open</i> A2. Reading reflections for M1. Ch. 13 <i>due</i>	A3. Skills practice group 5

	8/18				A2. Reading reflections for M1. Ch. 15 <i>due</i>	
	8/23				A2. Reading reflections for M1. Ch. 16 & M2. Chs. 1 & 2 <i>due</i> A1. Final exam <i>due</i>	

### **Policies and Important Information**

**Written Work Format.** All written work must conform to current American Psychological Association (APA) style 7<sup>th</sup> edition unless otherwise specified. If a student does not have a copy of the APA manual, one should be purchased, or students may use one of the many APA style websites available online, for example:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html).

Assessment will include how well students represent their thoughts on paper, craftsmanship in writing, and organization of all written work.

**Disability Accommodation Policy.** If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor prior to the start of this course. You must provide a letter from the Dean of Students that verifies your disabled status. The instructor and student will discuss the available accommodations for the course. If the student with a disability does not disclose that s/he has a disability, then the student is agreeing to take full responsibility for any related consequences that may occur.

**Access to Research Database.** RTS provides MAC students with access to the Ebscohost Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection of full text journal articles. You can access this collection from computers in the library, or from your home computer by following the link below and logging in with a username and password to be provided in class.

<http://search.ebscohost.com/>

**Submission of work.** All assignments should be submitted on the Canvas course webpage.

**Late work.** All assignments are due as scheduled regardless of attendance unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Assignments turned in late will be deducted 1/3 letter grade for each late day.

**Return of work.** All work will be returned to students via Canvas. Additionally, if students would like additional feedback, they may set up time before or after class to meet with the professor.

### Grading Scale

A (97-100)	B- (86-87)	D+ (75-77)
A- (94-96)	C+ (83-85)	D (72-74)
B+ (91-93)	C (80-82)	D- (70-71)
B (88-90)	C- (78-79)	F (Below)

**Attendance Policy.** Regular attendance is expected and required. Excessive absences (more than 1 class meetings) will result in the loss of points equal to one letter grade per absence. If serious illness or an emergency prevents a student from attending any class, please notify the instructor before the class begins. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any materials handed out or presented during the missed class from a classmate.

**Class Participation.** Students are expected to participate in all components of the class. Each student is expected to read all the assigned materials in advance for each class and have prepared written comments and questions for class discussion. Contributions should reflect knowledge of the reading assignments or other sources.

### Student Learning Outcome Table

The table below shows how the objectives of this course will be met by readings, lectures and assignments used. Details about specific course objectives, assignments, and evaluation methods can be found in previous sections of this syllabus.

Course objectives: Knowledge outcomes	Readings	Lecture	Assignments	CACREP standards
CO1. An overarching theory and model of counseling (the "Three-Stage Model" of Exploring Understanding and Acting) and the essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills which facilitate each of those stages.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1	A1. Exams A2. Reflections	2.F.5.a, b, g
CO2. A detailed consideration of Active Listening aspects of interviewing and counseling skills used primarily (not exclusively) in early stages of the HRD model (Attending and Responding skills, including their sub-skills).	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1, 2	A1. Exams A2. Reflections A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.c, g, n
CO3. Current research on behavioral characteristics of effective counselors, i.e., the nature of therapeutic relationships / therapeutic alliance and their relation client outcome.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1, 5	A1. Exams A2. Reflections A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.a, c, f, g, n
CO4. The nature and relevant examples of evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention and how the elements of Active Listening and Understanding-stage skills are related.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1-10	A1. Exams A2. Reflections A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.a, b, c, f, g, j 5.C.3.b

CO5. An ongoing theological positive and negative critique of the conceptual and practical course-content from a traditional (Reformed) biblical perspective.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1	A2. Reflections	2.F.5.a, b, c, f, g, j
CO6. The historical development and philosophical underpinnings of the HRD model <i>vis a vis</i> other theories and models of counseling.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1	A2. Reflections	2.F.5.a, b, f, g, j
CO 7. The initial process of developing one's own model of counseling.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1-10	A1. Exams A2. Reflections A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.a, b, j, n
CO8. How to develop client outcome measures, especially in later stages of the HRD model.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 10	A2. Reflections	2.F.5.a, b, i, j
CO9. An introduction and overview of core ethical concepts (confidentiality, client consent, multicultural competence, and the impact of technology on relationships and the counseling process).	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	L 1, 2	A1. Exams A2. Reflections	2.F.5.a, d, e, f, n
CO10. How the Three Stage Model applies to a systems conceptualization of clients, i.e., couples and families as well as to organizations.	M1. Sbanotto, et. al M2. Scott, et. al	L 1, 10	A2. Reflections	2.F.5.b, c, n
CO11. How the Three Stage Model applies to theories and models of consultation in various settings.	M2. Scott, et. al	L 10	A2. Reflections	2.F.5.b, c, n
<b>Course objectives: skill outcomes</b> (All address essential interviewing, counseling and consultation skills.)		<b>Skills practice group #</b>		
CO12. Attending: physically, listening and observing	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.f, g
CO13. Consistent and accurate responding to content	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.f, g
CO14. Consistent and accurate responding to feeling	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.f, g
*CO15. Consistent and accurate responding to meaning	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.f, g
*CO16. The effective use of open questions, and Understanding and Acting Stage skills	M1. Sbanotto, et. al	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	A3. Skills practice groups	2.F.5.f, g

### Course Objectives Related to MAC\* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO5500 Counseling and Helping Relationship Skills

Professor: Scott Coupland

Campus: Orlando

Date: Summer Session 2023

<b>MAC* Student Learning Outcomes</b> <i>In order to measure the success of the MAC 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 MAC outcomes.</i>		<b>Rubric</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<b>Mini-Justification</b>
<b>Professional Counseling Orientation &amp; Ethical Practice</b>	Understands and applies the basic knowledge needed to be an effective counselor including: the history and philosophy of counseling, ethical standards of practice, personal career development, advocacy for clients, consultation & collaboration, and a Reformed, biblical and theological framework for counseling.	Strong	Students develop and practice a three-stage framework for basic counseling skills that can be applied to all contexts of counseling. They also learn ethical and biblical principles for doing so.
<b>Social &amp; Cultural Diversity</b>	Understands and demonstrates how living in a cultural/global society affects clients who are seeking counseling and clinical mental health services, as well as the effects of sin such as racism, discrimination, sexism, and oppression on one's own life and career and those of the client.	Minimal	Students consider cultural factors that must be considered in applying basic counseling skills.
<b>Human Growth &amp; Development</b>	Understands and applies knowledge of various theories of individual and family development, and factors affecting human development. To include biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and environmental factors, addiction, and effects of crisis, disasters, and traumas.	None	
<b>Career Development</b>	Understands and applies theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making.	None	
<b>Counseling &amp; Helping Relationships</b>	Understands and applies theories and models of counseling, strategies for understanding and practicing consultation, and developing relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans.	Strong	Students develop and practice a three-stage framework for basic counseling skills that can be applied to all contexts of counseling.
<b>Group Counseling &amp; Group Work</b>	Understands and applies theories and models of group counseling and group work, dynamics of the group process and development, and therapeutic factors that contribute to group effectiveness.	None	
<b>Assessment &amp; Testing</b>	Understands and applies clinical knowledge effectively, including various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses. To include diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments, and is sensitive to the complications of diagnosis	None	



	and interpretation of formal and informal evaluation.		
<b>Research &amp; Program Evaluation</b>	Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate research through a biblical worldview and integrate it into counseling practice. Understands the process of program evaluation and its integration into the practice of counseling and clinical mental health counseling.	Minimal	Students learn the empirical basis for three-stage framework of counseling skills.
<b>Clinical Mental Health Counseling</b>	Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling.	Strong	Students gain fundamental counseling skills that can be practiced in all contexts of counseling practice.
<b>Integration (Biblical/Theological)</b>	Knowledge of and integration of Reformed, biblical and theological concepts with counseling practices.	Moderate	Students develop a biblical and theological understanding for the application of basic counseling skills.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the triune God.	Strong	Triad group exercises provide context for practicing counseling skills that image Christ's care of us to others.