

CO5660 Addictions and Substance Abuse

Reformed Theological Seminary – Jackson Campus

Winter 2026
3 Credit Hours

Instructor

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LPC, LMFT, CSAT, EMDR II, Gottman I

Contact Information

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Canvas Messaging Preferred

Class meeting time:

January 12-16, 2026

Monday - Friday, 8am-12pm/1pm-5pm

Office Hours

Available Upon Request

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to basic concepts and methodologies of addiction and addiction treatment. Students will be taught current treatment protocols based on the latest understanding and research. This course is designed to help students be more effective in treating and referring their future addicted clients. The course will focus on understanding theories of addiction and addiction treatment as well as developing an integrated, compassionate approach to the addict and recovery that includes biological, psychological, and spiritual categories. Students will expand their understanding through reading about addiction and recovery, participating in groups both in class and outside of class, and writing papers to help build a working framework for addiction and its treatment.

Course Objectives (Knowledge and Skill Outcomes)

Students will demonstrate comprehension of the following (applicable CACREP standard in parenthesis):

FOUNDATIONS OF ADDICTIONS

CO1. History and development of addiction counseling, including a foundation for understanding addiction and recovery while uncovering personal assumptions and biases in treatment. (5.A.1.a)

CO2. Theories, models, and etiology of addiction related to substance use as well as behavioral and process addictions. (2.F.3.d, 5.A.1.b, 5.C.1.d)

CO3. Principles and philosophies of addiction related to self-help, including the limitations of this model. (5.A.1.c)

CO4. Principles, models, and documentation formats of biopsychosocial case conceptualization and treatment planning. (5.A.1.d)

CO5. Neurological, behavioral, psychological, physical, and social effects of psychoactive substances and addictive disorders on the user and significant others. (5.A.1.e)

CO6. Psychological tests and assessments specific to addiction counseling. (5.A.1.f)

CO7. Approaches for conceptualizing the connection of individual work to God's work.

CONTEXTUAL DIMENSIONS OF ADDICTION TREATMENT

CO8. Integration of Biblical passages with theories, models, and etiology of addiction and recovery.

CO9 Roles and settings of addiction counselors. (5.A.2.a)

CO10. Potential for addictive and substance use disorders to mimic and/or co-occur with a variety of medical and psychological disorders. (5.A.2.b)

- CO11. Factors that increase the likelihood for a person, community, or group to be at risk for or resilient to psychoactive substance use disorders as well as behavioral and process addictions. (5.A.2.c)
- CO12. Importance of vocation, family, social networks, and community systems in the addiction treatment and recovery process. (5.A.2.e)
- CO13. Role of wellness and spirituality in the addiction recovery process. (5.A.2.f)
- CO14. Culturally and developmentally relevant education programs that raise awareness and support addiction and substance abuse prevention and the recovery process. (5.A.2.g)
- CO15. Classifications, indications, and contraindications of commonly prescribed psychopharmacological medications for appropriate medical referral and consultation. (5.A.2.h)
- CO16. Diagnostic process, including differential diagnosis addressing the potential for substance use disorders to mimic and/or co-occur with a variety of neurological, and the use of current diagnostic classification systems, including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). (5.A.2.i, 5.C.2.e)
- CO17. Cultural factors relevant to addiction and addictive behavior. (5.A.2.j)
- CO18. Legal and ethical considerations specific to addiction counseling. (5.A.2.l)

Methods of Instruction

This course will be taught in the following format:

Instructional: Classes will be in seminar format and will include lectures, readings, film, and class discussion.

Experiential: Students will be required to participate in a recovery group outside of the classroom and share their experience with the class sometime during the week.

Individual: Readings have been tailored to help students assimilate information into current understanding, as well as to begin to practically apply that understanding into work with current and future clients.

Group: Several tasks of learning will be done in group settings, both large and small. This will be a time to utilize the experience, understanding and curiosity of peers in order to further knowledge.

Assignments (Student Performance Evaluation Criteria)

The Following Assignments are to be completed BEFORE the one-week class

(These items will be turned in before the start of class, each day late will result in 10% deduction per day)

A.1 Pre-Reading Paper (10%)

Before you do anything else in this class, you will write a short reflection paper. The goal of this paper is to establish your current thinking around addiction, in order that you might best challenge your thinking throughout this course. This is an opinion paper, meaning that you ought not refer to outside resources. This should be no longer than one-page and should answer the following questions. Please upload this on Canvas upon completion (or email it to me if you don't yet have access to Canvas). You will only be graded on completion of the above objectives, not on accuracy of thought.

In one to three sentences, define addiction based on your current understanding.

What do you believe are the major causes or factors that lead a person towards addiction?

What is the best method or model for treatment for an addict?

What is your theological understanding of addiction? Is drug use a sin, why or why not?

What could make a person vulnerable to addiction?

A.2. Experiential Tasks: (10%) Students will attend one 'Open' 12-step meeting and one Celebrate Recovery (or other church-focused addiction support) meeting before the week of the class. (Open meetings are for anyone, closed meetings are only for addicts only).

The goal of this project is for you to experience first-hand some of the emotions, confusion, and stress of attending a 12-step meeting by yourself, so that you will better be able to empathize with your clients.

You will need to find and attend these meetings individually, meaning that you must plan on finding and going to the meeting by yourself. If you see one of your peers at this meeting you need to sit separately. Do not talk about these meetings in any way with one another before class. When someone at the meeting asks you who you are, tell them that you are a counseling student who is checking it out. Do not pretend to be something you're not or lie about why you are there. Do not speak up during the meeting, you are only there to listen.

Immediately after each visit, hand-write a journal entry (at least half a page long) of what the experience was like for you. What emotions came up in trying to find the meeting, what came up in walking into the room on your own, what was it like when people talked to you, what was it like to sit and listen, and anything else that comes up for you. If you have been to a meeting before, you still need to fulfill this assignment as written. Bring this reflection to the first class.

A.3. Assigned Readings: (30%)

Reading Assignments:

Section/Chapter Summaries: With each of the texts (see below), students will write a 2-3 sentence reflection of each chapter which includes your main takeaway, a question (or two) the reading brought up, and (optional) an application that could be made to student's own life and/or to current and future work with clients. These summaries will be used in our class discussions.

Reading Essay: After reading the entire book, students will write a one-page essay (25 points) on the following:

1. How this book has impacted your understanding of addiction.
2. How this book has impacted your understanding of treating addiction.
3. Areas in which student needs to further their understanding of addiction.
4. How this book fits or differs from student's personal theology.
5. Any personal applications to student's life or practice as a counselor.

The goal in this assignment is to digest and assimilate the information from each article/book into current understanding of addiction and addiction treatment, so that student will have a broad working knowledge to better serve clients.

Maté, Gabor, M.D. – 'In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction, ISBN – 10:155643880X, ISBN-13: 978-1556438806

For 'In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts', students will write a short summary for each Sections 1, 2 & 3, (5 points each) and a short chapter summary for each chapter 17-34 (1 point each).

After reading, student will write a one-page book essay (see above)

Alcoholics Anonymous (i.e. Big Book) 2002 edition

Chapter Summaries: Doctors Opinion, Chs. 1-7; 11

Reading Essay: After reading this book, students will write a one-page essay (see above)

A.4. Additional Book assignment and group work: (15%)

Choose another book on the subject of addiction that you find interesting. You will need to [go to this link](#) to sign up for a book. If you would like to read a book that is not on this list, email Branden for approval before doing so. No two students should be reading the same book. Once you are signed up for a book, read the text and include chapter summaries using the essay guidelines listed in A.3 (25 points). Additionally, answer the following questions in a one-to-two-page report after completing the book (50 points)

1. How this book has impacted your understanding of addiction.
2. How this book has impacted your understanding of treating addiction.
3. Areas in which student needs to further their understanding of addiction.
4. How this book fits or differs from student's personal theology.
5. Any personal applications to student's life or practice as a counselor.
6. What did you learn in this book that was consistent with the teaching in the required reading books? (In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, AA Big Book)
7. What did you learn in this book which was different from the teaching in the required reading books?

You will meet in small groups during class to discuss what you learned from your books and then share your findings with the whole class (25 points). Further details about this will be given at the beginning of class. You will be graded on preparedness and participation.

Article:

ACE Study Journal Article: Health Risk Behaviors (choose any one article under the publications dropdown menu and read/review the entire article) Find the list of these articles here under publications:

https://www.cdc.gov/aces/communication-resources/index.html#cdc_listing_res3-general-resources

Once you choose an article, follow the links to find the full text. Use EBSCO Host to find the article if needed.

Follow the instructions for the reading essay that are listed above.

The Following Assignments are to be completed AFTER the one-week class.

A.5. Personal Thesis: (35%)

Write a 6–10-page paper including: 1) personal understanding of addiction, 2) areas of conflict or change in your understanding of addiction throughout the course and readings (reflect on your pre-reading paper) 3) what creates vulnerability to addiction, 4) what sustains addiction, 5) best avenues for treatment, 6) personal limitations in treating it, and 7) its spiritual components, as well as anything else you found important throughout this course and readings. The paper will cite at least five current sources and draw from personal experience, readings for class, and class discussions. It needs to include consideration of biological, psychological, relational, and spiritual categories.

A6. Course Evaluation (0% of grade but required for course completion)

Course evaluations are critical for assessing and improving the MAC program. Therefore, each MAC course includes an assignment to complete an anonymous online course evaluation. You will verify whether you 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 (Texts, Readings, etc.):

M1. Mate, Gabor (2010). *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*. North Atlantic Books, ISBN: 978-1556438806

M2. Adverse Childhood Experiences Journal Articles: Health Risk Behaviors.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/journal.html>.

M.3. Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition, 2002. ISBN: 978-1893007161

M.4. (Optional) Mack, A. H., Brady, K. T., Miller, S. I., & Francis, R. J. (2016) Clinical textbook of addictive disorders (4th ed.) New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Course Process and Schedule

Lecture ID	Date	Topic	Group Work	Assignments Due	CACREP 2016 Standards
L1	Day 1 a.m.	Introduction: Syllabus Foundation for Understanding Addictions & Recovery (using alcoholism as a context) Integration of Biblical	Class Discussion	-Reading of Required Texts & Written Book Assignment (A3, A4) -Meetings Paper (A2) -Reflection Paper (A1)	5.A.1.a,c,f 5.A.2.f,g,i,j
L2	Day 1 p.m.	Models of Addiction Treatment and Best Practices	Class Discussion, Book discussion		5.A.1.b,c,f 5.A.2.g,h,i
L3	Day 2 a.m.	Biology of Addiction The Addicted Brain Considerations for Treatment	Book Discussions		5.A.1.d,e,f 5.A.2.b,c,f,h,i,j,l 5.C.1.d 5.C.2.e
L4	Day 2 p.m.	Men, Women, Adolescents, the Family Etiology Addictive Behaviors Considerations for Treatment	Process ACE Questionnaire,	Group Presentation (A4)	5.A.1.b,d,e,f 5.A.2.e,f,i,j
L5	Day 3 a.m.	Sexual Addiction Etiology Addictive Behaviors Considerations for Treatment	Class Discussion		5.A.1.b,d,e,f 5.A.2.c,f,i,j

L6	Day 3 p.m.	Eating Addictions Etiology Addictive Behaviors Considerations for Treatment	Class Discussion	Group Presentation (A4)	5.A.1.b,d,e,f 5.A.2.c,f,i,j
L7	Day 4 a.m.	Drug Addictions Etiology Addictive Behaviors Considerations for Treatment	Class Discussion		5.A.1.b,d,e,f 5.A.2.c,f,i,j
L8	Day 4 p.m.	Technology Addictions Etiology Addictive Behaviors Considerations for Treatment	Mindfulness Activity	Group Presentation (A4)	5.A.1.b,d,e,f 5.A.2.c,f,i,j
L9	Day 5 a.m.	The Practice of Treating Addiction The Addiction Counselor	Experiential Activities		5.A.2.a,g,l
L10	Day 5 a.m.	Conclusion			5.A.2.a,g,l
				After Class: Personal Thesis DUE	5.A.2.a,g,l

Policies and Important Information

All written work must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style. 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 (e.g., <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). 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 require a special adaptation or accommodation to participate fully in this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss your request. You must provide a letter from the Dean of Students that verifies your disabled status. Last minute special requests will be subject to the same late assignment policy as other students.

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/>

Use of Artificial Intelligence. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. You may use AI programs (e.g. ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, be aware that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant RTS policies. Of course, there are many cases where I may not be able to tell if you cheated or not. Note however that, for any reason, including doubts about whether the paper was written with external help, any student can be required to come in for an oral examination on their paper. In such a case, a grade for the oral examination will replace that for the paper.

Submission of work. Work can be printed off and turned in or mailed to professor, or work can be submitted via email (preferred). Make sure to have your student ID number on top of all pages.

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 10 percent for each late day.

Anonymity. All written assignments and exams should be identified by the last six digits of your Self-Service id number and NOT by your name. Anonymity permits more objectivity in grading.

Return of work. All work returned to students will be available in the MAC Office. Any work not collected by the first full week of the next semester or term will be shredded.

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 70)

Attendance Policy: Due to the nature of this class as a one-week modular format, regular attendance is expected and required. Excessive absences (more than ½ a class meeting) 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 of the assigned materials in advance for each class. Contributions should reflect knowledge of the reading assignments.

Student Learning Outcome Table

The table below shows how the objectives of this course will be met, and how they relate to CACREP Standards. Details about specific course objectives, assignments, and evaluation methods can be found in later sections of this syllabus.

CACREP Standard(s)	Course Objective	Material	Lecture	Assignment / Evaluation
5.A.1.a	CO1: History, development, foundations of Addiction Counseling.	M1 (Chapters 1-16) M2 (Chapter 1)	L1	A.2 Book Assignments; A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis
2.F.3.d 5.A.1.b 5.C.1.d	CO2: Theories, Models, Etiology of Addiction	M1 (Chapter 2 17-22) M2 (Chapters 2-3)	L2,4,5,6,7,8	A.1 12-Step Meeting; A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.1.c	CO3: Self-help and its limitations	M1 (Chapters 17-22) M2 (Chapter 7)	L1,2	A.1 12-Step Meeting; A.2 Book Assignments;

CACREP Standard(s)	Course Objective	Material	Lecture	Assignment / Evaluation
				A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.1.d	CO4: Biopsychosocial concepts and treatment	M1 (Chapter 17-34) M2 (Chapter 8)	L3,4,5,6,7,8	A.2 Book Assignments; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.1.e	CO5: Neurological, behavioral, psychological, physical, and social effects of addiction	M1 (Chapter 11-28) M2 (Chapter 2-18) M3 (ACE Journal Article)	L3,4,5,6,7,8	A.1 12-Step Meeting; A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.1.f	CO6: Psychological Tests & Assessments	M1 (Appendices I, II, III, IV) M2 (Chapters 1,8) M3 (ACE Journal Article)	L1-8	A.2 Book Assignments; A.5 Personal Thesis
	CO7: God's Work	M1 (Chapters 9,10,21-23) Recommended Reading	L1,2,9,10	A.1 12-Step Group; A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion; A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis
	CO8: Biblical Passages	Recommended Reading	L1, 9, 10	A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion; A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal ThesisCO
5.A.2.a	CO9: Roles & Settings For Counselor	M1 (Chapters 9,10,21-34)	L9,10	A.2 Book Assignments; A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.2.b	CO10: Co-occurring disorders	M1 (Appendice II) M3 (ACE Journal Article)	L3	A.2 Book Assignments
5.A.2.c	CO11: Factors for resilience	M1 (Chapters 29-34) M2 (Chapters 2-9) M3 (ACE Journal Article)	L3-8	A.1 12-Step Meeting; A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion
5.A.2.e	CO12: Importance of family & community support	M1 (Chapters 23-34) M2 (Chapters 8,9)	L4	A.1 12-Step Meeting
5.A.2.f	CO13: Role of wellness & spirituality	M1 (Chapters 29-34) M2 (Chapters 8.9)	L1-8	A.1 12-Step Meeting; A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/DiscussionA.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis

CACREP Standard(s)	Course Objective	Material	Lecture	Assignment / Evaluation
5.A.2.g	CO14: Cultural & educational awareness	M1 (Chapters 23-34) M3 (ACE Journal Article) Recommended Reading	L1,2,9,10	A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion
5.A.2.h	CO15: Pharmacological Medications	M2 (Chapter 2)	L3	A.2 Book Assignments
5.A.2.i 5.C.2.e	CO16: Diagnosis	M1 (Chapter 1) M2 (Chapter 1)	L1-8	A.2 Book Assignments; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.2.j	CO17: Cultural Factors	M1 (Chapters 11-16; 23-34) M2 (Chapter 8)	L1,3-8	A.1 12-Step Meeting; A.2 Book Assignments; A.3 Recommended Reading/Discussion; A.4 Reflection Paper; A.5 Personal Thesis
5.A.2.l	CO18: Legal/Ethical considerations	M1 (Chapters 9,10,23-28)	L3,9,10	A.2 Book Assignments; A.5 Personal Thesis

Course Objectives Related to MAC* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO5660 Substance Abuse & Addiction

Professor: Dr. Branden Henry

Campus: Jackson

Date: Winter Session 2026

MAC* Student Learning Outcomes <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>		Rubric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	Mini-Justification
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	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.	Moderate	Students will learn about ethical and best practices for treating addictions from a biblical framework.
Social & Cultural Diversity	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.	Strong	Students will learn about diversity issues related to addiction, as well as systemic issues which add to issues around addiction, recovery, and adequate care.
Human Growth & Development	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.	Strong	Students will learn about addiction from research based theory, as well as the treatment of addiction from current understand of neurological and environmental factors.
Career Development	Understands and applies theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making.	None	None
Counseling & Helping Relationships	Understands and applies theories and models of counseling, strategies for understanding and practicing consultation, and developing relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans.	Moderate	Students will learn about the application of counseling practices towards the issues of addiction.
Group Counseling & Group Work	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.	Minimal	Students will learn about the efficacy of group work for addiction treatment.
Assessment & Testing	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 and interpretation of formal and informal evaluation.	Minimal	Students will learn about assessments for differing addictions as well as best practices in utilizing them.

Research & Program Evaluation	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.	Moderate	Students will read and study addiction through the most current research found in books and peer-reviewed journals.
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling.	Moderate	Students will learn about treating addiction in a multitude of settings.
Integration (Biblical/Theological)	Knowledge of and integration of Reformed, biblical and theological concepts with counseling practices.	Moderate	Students will engage all subject matter through a biblical framework.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the triune God.	Moderate	Students will not only look at how to help others, but will be challenged with their own needs for growth, change, and healing.