

CO5150 MARRIAGE & FAMILY COUNSELING

3 Credit Hours

Winter 2026

January 26–30, 2026; Mon–Fri, 8:30a–5:30p

Reformed Theological Seminary: Charlotte

Instructor: Robert D. Jones, D.Theol., D.Min, Visiting Professor
Professor of Biblical Counseling and Practical Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
robertdjones.bob@gmail.com

TA/Assistant: Olivia Schneider
Oschneider@rts.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on the complex dynamics involved in marriage, parenting, and family dysfunction. Beginning with a biblical understanding of the nature of marriage and the family, topics such as singleness, pre-marital counseling, marital conflict, sexuality, and parenting will be addressed.

Course Materials

I will post a detailed course teaching and discussion lecture manual on Canvas no later than one week before our residential class time. There is a lot of reading, but these books are not as difficult as the reading in many of your other classes. Plus, you will use these books ongoingly in your life and ministry.

Required Reading

- Baker, Amy, ed. *Caring for the Souls of Children: A Biblical Counselor's Manual*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2020. 290 pp. ISBN: 978-1-645070-63-4.
- Fitzpatrick, Elyse, and Jim Newheiser. *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices: Help and Hope for Hurting Parents*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2005. 246 pp. ISBN: 978-0736915649.
- Jones, Robert D. *My Spouse Was Unfaithful: Finding Strength in God's Presence*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2023. 83 pp. ISBN: 978-1-64507-387-1.
- Jones, Robert D. *Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling Our Conflicts*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. 190 pp. ISBN: 978-1433530135.
- Newheiser, Jim. *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017. 294 pp. ISBN 1629953164
- Tripp, Paul David. *Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. 352 pp. ISBN: 978-14335-73101

Extra Credit Reading

(not required, but extra credit if you report having read this book)

- Allberry, Sam. *7 Myths About Singleness*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 153 pp. ISBN: 978-1433561528.
- Tripp, Paul David. *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles that Can Radically Change Your Family*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016. 240 pp. ISBN: 978-1433551932.
- Jones, Robert D. *Single Parents: Daily Grace for the Hardest Job*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-1934885277 (Minibook).

Newheiser, Jim and Fitzpatrick, Elyse. *You Never Stop Being a Parent*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010. 191 pp.

The expectation is that students will read every word of these books to receive full reading credit. If you have already read any of the assigned readings, you may either read them again word for word or contact the professor for an alternative assignment. Students will be graded based on their self-reporting according to the following rubric (appended to Canvas):

	Percentage of the book read the book word-for-word
	Percentage of the book skimmed
	Read by due date (Yes or No)

Assignments and Assessments

This course is entirely electronic in its submission of assignments. Each assignment will be uploaded to Canvas in the appropriate portal. If you have any questions regarding the use of Canvas, please reach out to the class TA.

1. Reading Report

Students are to turn in a report stating the percentage of each book or pamphlet read by the due date. No summaries are required on this page. The reading report form can be found in the modules section on Canvas.

2. Counseling Art and Pam Outline

Based on the course lectures and required reading, write a 3–4-page paper outlining your strategy for counseling Art and Pam based on the case study below. Write in outline form (with 1.5 spacing), not paragraphs, and keep any successive levels of indentation at only .3 indented from the previous line.

Consider questions like these (without making these your outline):

- What key issues do they face individually or as a couple?
- Where would you start?
- What resources might you use and what growth assignments might you give?
- What would the flow or agenda of your sessions look like, especially the first two or three, including possible growth assignments?

Some parameters:

- Don't summarize the facts of the case or detail generic counseling procedures or techniques; focus on how you will minister to this couple.
- Don't re-explain tools or assignments explained in class but only if, why, and how you might use any.
- Don't make assumptions not stated or list fact questions you might ask—I know a written study is incomplete. Go with the facts presented.
- Cite Scripture as parenthetical references (without quoting verses), not footnotes, to support your points and how you might apply those passages to Art and/or Pam.
- This is not a research paper; no need to cite course lectures or reading.

3. Research Paper

There are two options for your Research Paper.

Option 1: Students will select a topic related to marriage & family counseling and write a 10-12 page research paper. This paper must advance a thesis and make a case for that thesis through research-backed argumentation. Students are highly recommended to read the materials in the research paper folder on Canvas for aid in formulating and arguing a thesis. Papers are to have a minimum of 6 academic sources

(books, journal articles, etc.). Students will submit a topic towards the beginning of the semester (see course schedule) to receive approval.

Option 2: Students may complete the second half of the ACBC Theology Exam, or if you have already taken the second half then complete the first half. You need to include (write out) the question you are answering from the exam. This exam is a take-home, open book.

4. Final Exam

Your final exam will take the form of short-answer questions and a short case study or two from the lecture material and not the reading. You will download the exam from Canvas, complete it in the presence of a proctor, and upload it to Canvas.

5. Class Attendance and Participation

It is very important to me that you attend class each day and that you be on time. Students who are late or who miss class without a valid excuse will be penalized for each unexcused tardiness or absence.

Due Date	Reading and Assignments
Sat, Jan 24	Tripp, <i>Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make</i>
	Newheiser, <i>Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage</i> .
	Baker, ed. <i>Caring for the Souls of Children</i>
	Jones, <i>Pursuing Peace</i>
	Fitzpatrick and Newheiser, <i>When Good Kids Make Bad Choices</i>
	Jones, <i>My Spouse Was Unfaithful</i>
Mon, Jan 26	Reading Report (due by the beginning of class)
Sat, Feb 7	Final Exam
Sat, Feb 14	Counseling Art and Pam
Sat, Mar 14	Research Paper

Late Assignments and Extensions Policy

Assignments are due on the date indicated above. Late assignments will be penalized.

Extensions Policy for Assignments: In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

Course Grading

Reading Report	20%
Attendance and Participation	10%
Counseling Art and Pam Outline	15%
Paper Topic Submission	1%
Research Paper	24%
Final Exam	30%

Grading Scale

Standard RTS Grading Scale

Nuts And Bolts

Special Needs

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., audio recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking, or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the Registrar.

Disclaimer

During the course of the semester, the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary to the professor because of events and circumstances that occur during the term.

Classroom Policies

- All classroom policies at RTS Charlotte are expected to be followed.
- Guidelines for papers submitted in this course can be found as a separate document on Canvas.
Reading this document and following its instructions is essential for you to pass this course.
- Students are required to cite all sources consulted for a written assignment. Students who plagiarize or cheat in any other manner are guilty of academic misconduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students. This will result in disciplinary action up to and including failure of the course and academic dismissal.
- Laptops are welcome in class for note-taking only. Only word processing programs may be open during class; no browsers, email programs, social media feeds, or any other program is to be used. Please silence cell phones and do not text, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, or whatever else desperately beckons for your attention during class.

Exams may be conducted outside of class time. In this case, students will be asked to adhere to the following process:

Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 - a. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.

- b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
 6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.

Please also adhere to the following RTS internet usage protocol:

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.



Course Objectives Related to MACC Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO5150 - Marriage & Family Counseling
 Professor: Dr. Robert D. Jones (Visiting Professor)
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Jan 26-30, 2026

<u>MACC Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MACC 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 MACC outcomes.</i>	<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<u>COUNSELING KNOWLEDGE</u> Demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and modern anthropology.	Strong	Course emphasizes the outworking of lostness and redemption in the context of marriage and the family. Theories of care are discussed and analyzed.
<u>COUNSELING SKILL</u> Ability to apply biblical truths and common-grace insights in a variety of counseling settings.	Strong	Students are prepared to address challenging situations involving multiple parties.
<u>SCRIPTURE</u> Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.	Strong	Scripture is presented as the chief method through which the Holy Spirit brings forth genuine heart transformation.
<u>REFORMED THEOLOGY</u> Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.	Moderate	Material is not applicable from an exclusively reformed position; however, the sovereignty and care of God for his creatures in covenant with him is extensively discussed.
<u>SANCTIFICATION</u> Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	The course will cover singleness, marriage, and family. Course concepts address both counseling and marriage in general personal application is made.
<u>WINSOMELY REFORMED</u> Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos.	Moderate	Course addresses reformed concepts of covenant and relationship in a winsome manner.