



CO5000 Intro to Christian Counseling
PT5350 Pastoral Counseling
3 Credit Hours

Summer 2026
June 22-26, Monday-Friday 8AM - 5 PM,
Reformed Theological Seminary: Charlotte

Professor Information

Keith A. Evans, PhD
Associate Professor of Christian Counseling

kevans@rts.edu

TA/Assistant

Caroline Mobley

CMobley3044@student.rts.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to biblical (pastoral) counseling from a distinctly Reformed theological framework. It establishes the biblical foundations that shape a faithful counseling methodology, contrasts biblical counseling with competing approaches, and demonstrates how theology informs pastoral practice/counseling. The course introduces core counseling skills and applies them to common counseling concerns, including conflict, anger, fear, anxiety, depression, and suffering, with emphasis on the wise and faithful application of Scripture in church and parachurch settings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Articulate the biblical and theological foundations of a Reformed approach to counseling
- B. Evaluate and distinguish biblical counseling from other approaches to soul care
- C. Apply Scripture to personal growth and self-counsel in Christ
- D. Demonstrate a basic methodology for biblical pastoral counseling
- E. Employ Scripture wisely in addressing common pastoral counseling concerns

COURSE MATERIALS

Reading:

1. Adams, Jay E. *A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986
2. Emlet, Michael R. *CrossTalk: Where Life & Scripture Meet*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2009

3. Tripp, Paul D. *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002
4. Evans, Keith A. *Counseling & Extrabiblical Methods: Maintaining Fidelity to Scripture in Soul Care*, ACBC, 2026.
5. Greggo, Stephen P., and Timothy A. Sisemore, eds. *Counseling and Christianity: Five Approaches*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012.

The expectation is that students will read every word of these books to receive full reading credit. Students will be graded based on their self-reporting in the reading summaries described below.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

This course is entirely electronic for the submission of assignments. Each assignment will be uploaded to Canvas in the appropriate portal. If you are unfamiliar with this process, make sure you schedule a time in advance with the professor or TA to learn how to use Canvas.

1. Reading Interaction Papers

Students are to turn in a two page-double spaced paper, for each of the following books read: *Theology of Christian Counseling*, and *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*. State the percentage read of each book according to the following guide:

1. Percentage of the book read, word-for-word; 2. Percentage of the book skimmed. Then for the paper itself, page one will consist of a summary of the salient points of the book. Capture the thesis as well as the main points of the author's argument. Write it in such a way that if the author of the book read your summary, he could agree you understood what he was saying. Page two will be your personal interaction with the book—how was it useful to you, is it applicable in your ministry, were there things you found helpful or problematic, etc. We will discuss the books in class. Interaction papers will not be due until August 31, submitted on Canvas.

For each of the books where an interaction paper is not required, you will still have to submit a document indicating 1. Percentage of the book read, word-for-word; and 2. Percentage of the book skimmed.

2. Extra Canvas Readings

In addition to the above books, several articles or chapter excerpts will be included on Canvas for students to read and interact with during the class discussion time:

1. *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, by Archibald Alexander, Chapter IV on "Melancholy."
2. "Cure of Souls and the Modern Psychotherapies" by David Powlison, *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 25, no. 2 (2007).
3. "The Ambiguously Cured Soul." By David Powlison, *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 19, no. 3 (2001).
4. "Dialog between Biblical Counselors and Integrationists" (Powlison, Welch, Hurley and Berry), *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, Winter 1997
5. "Affirmations and Denials, A Proposed Definition of Biblical Counseling" David Powlison; *JBC* 19.1 18-25
6. "Critiquing Modern Integrationists", David Powlison; *JBC* 11.3 24-37
7. "Pastor as Counselor", Powlison; *JBC* 26.1 p. 23-39

No interaction papers are due for chapter/articles, but students will be expected to interact during the class discussion time on the content of the chapter/articles.

3. Personal Growth Plan

Choose a personal area in which you would like to grow. Develop a plan for change and implement your plan. The area for growth could include a qualification for eldership (1Tim 3 and Titus 1), an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5), or an area of pastoral counseling in which you need to improve. Find resources that speak to your issue – audios, mini-books, journal articles and books. Write a one-page summary to be turned in near the beginning of the semester outlining the problem and what resources you intend to use.

Write a four-page report to be turned in towards the end of the semester on how you have seen your thinking and actions change over the course of the semester with specific reference to how the resources you selected impacted you.

4. My View of Counseling

At the beginning of the semester students will write a two-page paper (double-spaced) on their view of the practice of counseling in the local church and what they hope to get out of this course.

5. How My Views Have Developed

At the end of the semester, students will write a five-page paper (double-spaced) on how their counseling views have developed. This paper should address issues including the sufficiency of Scripture in counseling, when and to whom to refer counselees, and the role of the church in counseling.

6. Website Review

Spend at least 1 hour each (4 hours total) browsing the following websites – CCEF, Biblical Counseling Coalition, ACBC and IBCD. Write a two-page summary of what specific resources you have found that a pastor or counselor could utilize in ministry.

7. Final Exam

Final exam questions will be taken from the ACBC Counseling exam. The exam will be offered as a take home exam and should be completed in Word. The Bible will be the only reference allowed during the exam. Students may not use the concordance or study notes in their Bibles during the exam. All answers should be well-supported with Scripture. The student should plan to spend the full three hours taking the exam. The final will be taken during the final exam period.

Final Exam Questions: ACBC Counseling exam questions 1-2, 4-8, 11, 13-15

* Please note that you must include (write out) the question from the ACBC exam which you are answering. Students may need to do research beyond class lectures in order to be prepared to answer the questions from the ACBC exam.

8. Class Attendance and Participation

Please attend each class and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Class participation factors into your final grade. Come to the course prepared to interact about each of the articles/chapter in Canvas. Interacting about the articles' contents during the course factors significantly into your final participation grade.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due as indicated on Canvas under the assignments. Assignments not submitted on time are considered late and are penalized 3% for the first day late, and 1% for each day late thereafter.

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 and Reading Interaction Papers	35%
Case Studies	20%
Observation Videos and Interaction Paper	20%
Final Exam	20%
Class Attendance and Participation	5%

Grading Scale:

Standard RTS Grading Scale

Additional Details:

Special Needs

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., recordings, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course to make appropriate arrangements.

Disclaimer

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

Classroom Policies

1. All classroom policies at RTS are expected to be followed.
2. Guidelines for papers (including reflections and exams) 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.**
3. 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 Academic Dean. This will result in disciplinary action up to and including failure of the course and academic dismissal.
4. 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 beckons for your attention during class.

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.

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

Course: PT5350/CO5000 - Pastoral Counseling/Intro to Christian Counseling
 Professor: Dr. Keith A. Evans
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Summer 2026

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Student Learning Outcomes</u></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Rubric</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mini-Justification</u></p>
<p><u>ARTICULATION</u> 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.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>This course requires students to articulate biblical and theological understanding both orally and in writing through reading interaction papers, case studies, and class discussion. Students are trained to communicate Scriptural truth clearly and pastorally, particularly in pastoral shepherding contexts.</p>
<p><u>SCRIPTURE</u> 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.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Students engage Scripture as the authoritative and sufficient source for counseling and pastoral care, learning to apply biblical truth wisely to contemporary situations. While original-language exegesis is not a central emphasis, students are trained to interpret Scripture responsibly and to employ it wisely in addressing pastoral and shepherding concerns.</p>
<p><u>REFORMED THEOLOGY</u> Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>The course is grounded in a Reformed theological framework, with counseling methodology flowing from confessional commitments reflected in the Westminster Standards. Students are introduced to how Reformed theology directly shapes pastoral shepherding.</p>
<p><u>SANCTIFICATION</u> Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.</p>	<p>Strong</p>	<p>This course emphasizes personal spiritual growth, self-application of Scripture, and dependence upon Christ in the shepherding task. Students are called to examine their own hearts, fostering growth in sanctification as a necessary foundation for faithful pastoral ministry.</p>

<p><u>WORLDVIEW</u> 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.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Students are trained to bring Scripture to bear on real-life problems within church and cultural contexts, discerning competing approaches to soul care and evaluating them biblically. The course encourages thoughtful engagement with contemporary issues while remaining focused on pastoral application rather than cultural analysis.</p>
<p><u>WINSOMELY REFORMED</u> Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos.</p>	<p>Strong</p>	<p>This course cultivates a gracious, humble, and pastorally sensitive expression of Reformed pastoral shepherding. Students are trained to counsel with clarity and conviction, demonstrating a winsome posture toward counselees/congregants.</p>
<p><u>PASTORAL MINISTRY</u> Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.</p>	<p>Strong</p>	<p>Pastoral shepherding is counseling. Counseling is pastoral shepherding. This course teaches an essential aspect of pastoral ministry that Christ calls his under-shepherds to faithfully engage in. Through case studies, observation of counseling practice, and applied assignments, students develop the ability to minister Scripture to the hearts and lives of both believers and unbelievers.</p>