



**CO5400 Counseling in the Local Church
1 Credit Hour**

Summer 2026
July 17-18, Fri. 8:00-5:00; Sat. 8:00-1:00
Reformed Theological Seminary: Charlotte

Professor Information

Keith A. Evans, PhD
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TA/Assistant

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes a biblical understanding of how God sanctifies people and discusses practical applications for ministry in the local church. While the counseling process for change is not new, this course develops a model for church-based counseling ministry as the primary context in which God effects change.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By studying the materials presented in this course, listening to the lectures, and completing the assignments and assigned projects, the student will be able to:

- A. Articulate a theology of the church, then, describe how to relate that to the care of people within the church.
- B. Apply this ecclesiology in developing techniques for counseling.
- C. Articulate practical procedures of accountability and protection within the context of the local church.

COURSE MATERIALS

Reading:

The Church as a Culture of Care: Finding Hope in Biblical Community by T. Dale Johnson, Jr. 176 pgs. ISBN: 1645071820

The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict by Alfred Poirier
320 pgs. ISBN: 0801065895

Chapters or Articles for Discussion in Class (freely available on Canvas):

Chapter 7 from *Bully Pulpit: Confronting the Problem of Spiritual Abuse in the Church* by

Mike Kruger, 21 pgs. (chapter on Canvas)

Chapter 10 from *Counseling the Hard Cases*, chapter written by Robert Jones on “Julie” and Addictions and Adultery, 9 pgs. (chapter on Canvas)

The expectation is that students will read every word of these books and select chapters 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 to learn how to use Canvas.

1. Reading Summary and Report

Students are to turn in a two page-double spaced paper for each book read. At the outset, 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 troubling, etc. These 2-page reports will be due August 31.

2. Final Application Paper

The course deals with ecclesiology and counseling. Select a church-based issue that has personal relevance to you and/or your ministry and develop your thoughts on how a reformed and evangelical understanding of the church directly impacts that issue. You may want to consider how your local church should handle a particular issue, or how a future ministry you hope to be a part of should theologically and practically handle a given topic. Make sure the chosen paper topic directly interfaces with ecclesiology and bring your ecclesiology to bear on the topic you select. Additionally, this is to be practical in nature, not merely academic or theoretical. **Please approve the paper topic with your professor, via email or verbally, no later than July 27.** Papers not receiving pre-approval from the professor will result in a 10% reduction in your final paper grade. Papers should aim to be 6-8 pages in length. Due **August 31.**

3. Class Attendance and Participation

Please attend each class and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Class participation factors into your final grade. While the Interaction Papers on the reading will not be due until August 31, please come prepared to discuss the readings, as in-class discussion influences your participation grade significantly.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due as indicated in Canvas. Assignments not submitted at this 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 / Interaction Papers	45%
Final Application Paper (Due August 31)	40%
Class Participation	15%

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 Charlotte 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 Dean of Students. 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 desperately beckons for your attention during class.

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.

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MACC Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Counseling in the Local Church
 Professor: Dr. Keith A. Evans
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Summer 2026

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MACC Student Learning Outcomes</u></p> <p><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 MAC 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>COUNSELING KNOWLEDGE</u> Demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and modern anthropology.</p>	Moderate	While the course deals with counseling theories and their ecclesiastical import, anthropology takes less of a focus than other counseling courses.
<p><u>COUNSELING SKILL</u> Ability to apply biblical truths and common-grace insights in a variety of counseling settings.</p>	Strong	This course deals with the application of a biblical ecclesiology, and the local church as the primary setting in which God affects change.
<p><u>SCRIPTURE</u> Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.</p>	Strong	Scripture is consistently presented as <i>the</i> basis of our ecclesiology, providing the elements and the circumstances of counseling.
<p><u>REFORMED THEOLOGY</u> Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.</p>	Moderate	A reformed understanding of theology results in a reformed practice of counseling. Thus, significant effort is made to ensure our church-based counseling is entirely reformed in its outlook.
<p><u>SANCTIFICATION</u> Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.</p>	Strong	This course deals with sanctification in the context of the local church. If God-initiated change is the aim of the counseling enterprise, the primary means He employs is that of the church.
<p><u>WINSOMELY REFORMED</u> Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos.</p>	Moderate	The course addresses a reformed ecclesiology as it relates to counseling, and does so in a winsome manner.

