



# CANADIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Alliance University College

## SYLLABUS

### CC621 Marriage & Family Counselling

Instructor: Dr. Don McNaughton (200@telus.net)

Canadian Theological Seminary

May 15-19, 2006

### Course Description

An introduction to the theory and practice of marriage and family counselling. Attention will be given to assessment and intervention in marriages, as well as key marriage issues such as intimacy, communication, conflict, forgiveness and commitment. Family therapy will be examined through four to six different family systems approaches. The course will include the articulation of Christian values, goals of personal and spiritual formation, and both professional and pastoral applications of the material.

### Course Objectives

- To present a Christian approach for couples and marriage counselling
- To introduce the student to current theories of marriage and family counselling.
- To evaluate a number of current theories of marriage and family counselling from a biblical perspective.
- To help the student acquire skills for evaluating and facilitating change in marital and family relationships. Attention will be given to:
  - Assessment and evaluation.
  - Formulating a treatment plan (conceptualizing change)
  - Intervention focused on promoting change

### Course Materials

- **Texts**

Worthington, Everett L. *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: A Guide to Brief Therapy, expanded edition*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 324 pages, ISBN: 0830827641

Nichols, Michael P. and Schwartz, Richard C. *The Essentials of Family Therapy, second edition*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2004. 384 pages, ISBN: 0205408141

- **Class Materials**

Wright, H. Norman. *Marital Assessment Inventory*. (two copies) Thousand Oaks, CA: Psychological Publications Inc. (supplied in class: total cost \$8.00)

## **Course Requirements**

### **1. Reading Requirements (20%)**

#### a. Reading Schedule (10%)

Because of the modular structure of this course, it is expected that the student will come to the first class having read both texts completely, and possessing a strong grasp of the material. The student is expected to discuss the texts in light of their own personal and professional experiences, their personal values and spirituality, and the theological/psychological perspective that is congruent with their beliefs and experience. As with all assignments, this reading assignment will be subject to a grade loss of 5% per day that it is late. **Due date – first class**

#### b. Reading Response (10%)

Write a short personal response to each of the two texts. (two pages per book) Focus your response on an interaction with the book. Do not write a summary or a book report. Summary comments will take space away from your personal response and result in a lower grade. Your response should contain what you think about the material in the text (What is your assessment of the material? How is it useful? What strengths or weaknesses may be associated with it? Etc.) **Due date – first class**

### **2. Class Participation (15%)**

Grading will be based on active class participation that demonstrates a familiarity with the texts, and an ability to interact theologically and personally with the theories and practices presented in the texts or class.

### **3. Pop Quizzes (10%)**

Quizzes from previous class material or text readings may be given at any time. Quizzes will be administered during the first ten minutes of class. Students arriving late for class will miss the opportunity to take the quiz.

### **4. Marital Inventory and Assessment (25%)**

Complete, and have your spouse complete, the Marital Assessment Inventory provided in class. If you are not married, ask a married couple whom you know to complete the inventory for you. Informed consent will be required from the persons completing the inventory, in order for the student to use the information provided to conduct assessment and treatment planning of marital issues. Use the completed inventory to write an assessment of your marriage (or if you are not married, an assessment of the couple who

filled out the marital inventory form for you). The assessment should total about ten pages, and should follow the outline below:

- a. Evaluate the relationship as you understand it, incorporating your observations and comments/judgment for each of the major sections covered by the inventory.
- b. Assess where this marriage is within the context of Worthington's family life cycle information, identifying the applicable transitions and stressors.
- c. Further evaluate the marital relationship in light of the following areas: intimacy, communication, conflict, hurt/blame/sin, and commitment.
- d. Plan four to six strategic marital counselling sessions for this couple, indicating therapy goals and plans for facilitating change in each session. Be specific about what you will actually do in the session (or what you will have the couple do), keeping in mind what can reasonably be accomplished in one hour.

You do not need to assume some deficiency or problem in the marriage. Respond to the MAI assessment as it stands; if the MAI indicates a healthy marriage, the four to six counselling sessions should be directed at what would enhance or strengthen the marriage.

**Due date: May 29**

## **5. Major Assignment (30%)**

Write a 16-page paper (minimum) in which you:

- a. Describe your personal worldview and belief system (i.e., your basic beliefs concerning life, things and people). **Worldview** is a term taken from the German word *Weltanschauung* meaning "look onto the world", referring to a person's set of beliefs about who we are, the way things are, and what we ought to do about it.
- b. Indicate how your worldview and belief system originated in the matrix of your familial, cultural and spiritual background.
- c. Describe the salient aspects of one of the family systems counselling theories presented in class.
- d. Apply the theory described to a discussion of:
  - i. Your worldview and beliefs,
  - ii. Your family background, and
  - iii. Your professional practice of pastoral care. If you are not currently active in pastoral care, apply the theory you have described to a discussion of your personal and community relationships.

This paper will reflect the student's learning from the required reading and from class discussion. The paper should demonstrate the student's ability to engage in analysis, critical evaluation and integration of concepts and practices. **Due date: June 19**

## **Course Hours**

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday, May 15 to May 19, 2006

## **Course Outline**

Monday	Examining the pressures on the institution of marriage Implications for marriage counseling A Christian approach to counselling couples The uniqueness of Christian counselling
Tuesday	Structure of marriage Structure of marriage counselling Stages of counselling Assessment tools
Wednesday	Interventions for Intimacy Interventions for Communication Interventions for Conflict Interventions for Forgiveness Interventions for Commitment
Thursday	Family therapy Family therapy structure Bowen theory, genograms Structural family therapy
Friday	Solution-focused therapy Narrative therapy Discussion: Christian values, goals, methods

## **Course Learning Outcomes**

As a result of completing this course, students can expect that they will:

- Identify some of the major trends and challenges in marriage and family counseling.
- Understand basic structures and the theoretical/historical underpinnings of a number of marriage and family counselling models.
- Develop a basic approach to marriage and family counseling that meets people's needs and honours God.
- Become familiar with five useful measures for assessing marriages and facilitating change.
- Understand how various counseling models impact personal theological convictions, and develop a biblical response to the theory and practice of those models.
- Understand key issues for demonstrating a godly presence and providing godly nurture through counseling.
- Interpret the Bible faithfully and relevantly for marriage and family counseling situations.

## **Important Notes**

- All papers should follow APA format, should be free of grammatical and spelling errors and should reflect Masters-level scholarship.
- The couple whose marriage is being assessed must sign an informed consent form.
- Delivery of assignments is by email to: [pleasemark@telus.net](mailto:pleasemark@telus.net).
- Late assignments will be subject to a grade loss of 5% per day that they are late.
- It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies of CTS as are stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar and Catalogue.
- Add/Drop Policy:
  - Students wishing to add a course should refer to the current academic calendar for the last day to officially enter the class. Students intending to withdraw from a course must complete the relevant Registration Revision form. The dates by which students may voluntarily withdraw from a course without penalty are contained in the Calendar of Events in the academic calendar.
- Requests for Course Extensions or Alternative Time for Examination:
  - Students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension.” Alternative times for final examinations cannot be scheduled without prior approval. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office two weeks prior to examination week (noted as the “Last Day for Alternative Exam or Course Extension Requests” on the academic calendar). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”
- Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty
  - The campus community is committed to fairness, due process, and proper compassion. At the same time, given our mission, we cannot merely overlook failures of personal integrity in academic matters and will deal with them in an effort to seek the best interest of all concerned.
  - The seminary is committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breeches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary. Even unintentional plagiarism is to be avoided at all costs. Students are expected to be familiar with the policy statements in the current academic calendar and the student handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean.

## INFORMED CONSENT

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Instructor: Dr. Don McNaughton

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

I understand that this exercise is part of a Marriage and Family Counselling course and I am willing to complete this Marriage Assessment Inventory for the purpose of assisting in the student's development of marriage and family counselling skills.

I understand that my information will be reviewed by the student and the student's instructor, and that no one else will be given access to this information; further, that the information will be destroyed upon the student's completion of the course, or failing completion of the course, in six months' time.

### PERMISSION

I hereby indicate that I have read and understand the above statements, and I give my permission for my Marital Assessment Inventory information to be used as described.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE