

MS 2A03 – PASTORAL COUNSELLING

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will examine the theory and practice of spiritual care and counseling in the context of Christian ministry. Emphasis will be on foundational counseling skills and processes within a framework of focused, short-term counseling. Particular attention will be directed to counseling in the crises and transitions of life. Students will also examine this theory, as well as other counseling theories, methods and processes, in light of theology, the realities of ministry, and topics of interest or concern that are relevant to the practice of ministry.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Through required and optional reading, lectures, class discussion and exercises, and the completion of assignments, the student should fulfill the following course objectives:

Knowing

- To understand the role, resources, processes, and boundaries of counseling in the context of Christian ministry.
- To learn basic helping skills for counseling in the context of Christian ministry.
- To learn a basic framework for short-term structured counseling in the context of Christian ministry.
- To gain a basic understanding of selected pastoral counselling topics.

Doing

- To acquire educational preparation for counseling in the context of Christian ministry, but not certification for professional counseling.
- To practice basic helping skills through “hands on experience.”
- To practice using a short-term counseling model through “hands on experience.”
- To develop a personal framework for the work of counseling in the context of Christian ministry.

Being

- To appreciate the healing potential of pastoral counseling as a ministry of the church.
- To be and become a responsible agent of hope, reconciliation and change in the lives of others.
- To experience the work of counseling in the context of Christian ministry as one of “companioning” with another.
- Through reflection on practice, to become self-aware of the student’s potential strengths and short-comings as a counselor.

COURSE TEXTS:

Required Texts & Materials: *

Kollar, Charles A. (1997). *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Mutter, Kelvin F. (2010). Class notes: *MS 2A03 – PASTORAL COUNSELLING*.

Ramsay, Nancy J. (1998). *Pastoral Diagnosis: A Resource for Ministries of Care and Counseling*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Worthington, Everett L. (1999). *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Recommended Reading:

Thomas, F.N. & Cockburn, J. (1998). *Competency-Based Counseling: Building on Client Strengths*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

McMinn, Mark R. (2008). *Sin and Grace in Christian Counseling*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

* Required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, R.E.A.D. On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

PROFESSOR:

Availability: Dr. Mutter will be available for one-on-one consultation before and after class and during breaks on each of the four scheduled teaching days. Otherwise, students may contact him at kfmutter@gmail.com.

Biography: Dr. Kelvin Mutter is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist (OAMFT/AAMFT), a Pastoral Counselling Specialist (CAPPE) and an Adjunct Professor at McMaster Divinity College. Dr. Mutter's ministry and counseling experience includes: counseling individuals, couples and families; training seminary and social work students in the art of counseling; and, pastoral and lay leadership in several churches in Southern Ontario. Dr. Mutter is married and has three adult children.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Date		Class Topic / Discussion	Assignment
Jan 22 on campus	a.m.	Introductory Matters	Recommended pre-reading: Kollar chs. 1-7
		Solution-Focused Pastoral Counselling – I	
	p.m.	Solution-Focused Pastoral Counselling – II	
Jan 24-29 Online Discussion		Drawing on the text and last Saturday's class discussion, respond to the posted case study.	Kollar chs. 1-7
Jan 31-Feb 5			Kollar chs. 9-15
Feb 12 on campus	a.m.	Guidelines for Culturally Competent Counseling	Ramsay chs. 1-3
	p.m.	Counseling for Reconciliation	
Feb 14-19 Online Discussion		Drawing on the text and the class discussion, respond to the posted case study.	Feb 19: Practice Counseling Assignment #1

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Date		Class Topic / Discussion	Assignment
Feb 21-26		Reading Week	No assignments
Mar 5 on campus	a.m.	Counseling for Addictions and Mental Health Issues	Ramsay chs. 4-8
	p.m.	Counseling for Issues of Abuse in Families	
Mar 7-12 Online Discussion		Drawing on the text and last Saturday's class discussion, respond to one of the posted case studies.	
Mar 14-19			Mar 19: Practice Counselling Assignment #2
Mar 26 on campus	a.m.	Guidelines for Couple Counseling	Read Worthington
	p.m.	Guidelines for Family Counseling	
		Guidelines for Counseling Adolescents	
Mar 28 - Apr 2		Drawing on the text and last Saturday's class discussion, respond to one of the posted case studies.	Apr 2: Critical Reflection on <i>Pastoral Diagnosis</i>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Participation: _____ (30%).

1.1. Class Participation (on campus) (15%) _____.

Class sessions will contain a mixture of lecture and seminar discussion. The participation grade will be assessed on the basis of the student's engagement with the material being presented and the student's ability to demonstrate familiarity with the texts.

1.2. Online Discussion (15%) _____.

Each student is expected to actively participate in the on-line class discussions. The course code/key will be announced at class rather than posted with this syllabus on the web. Because the web discussion depends on timely postings, posts will only receive credit if made by midnight of the due date. Posting well ahead of deadlines is encouraged as your comments are likely to invite comment or interaction from other members of the class. Thoughtful weekly participation and comments or questions that reflect the student is thinking through the readings or lectures will result in a higher grade.

- Grading (maximum of 5 points per week):
- Respond to the posted question – maximum 2 points
- Respond to another student's posting – maximum 3 points

Guidelines for on-line discussions:

- While the discussion board is only accessible to those who are registered in the course, it is still a "public space." Not every participant will have equal knowledge of other class members. Please keep this in mind as you decide how you interact and what you choose to share.
- Your comments must be pertinent to the question posed and/or the responses of others students.

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- Please follow these guidelines:
 - Remember the words of Ephesians 4:29 – “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”
 - Do not type in all capital letters. Remember, typing in all capital letters is indicative of yelling in cyberspace.
 - Refrain from flaming. This means do not use these forums to verbally express anger, displeasure or other hostility towards any other member on this site.
 - Share personal information at your own discretion, remember this is an open forum. No one from this site will ever ask for personal information such as an email address or password.

2. Course Readings:

Students are expected to completely read the assigned texts and to demonstrate familiarity with these texts both in their written work as well as their class interactions.

3. Practice Counselling Assignments (50%).

Instead of exams, students are required to complete two practice counseling sessions (preferably with a classmate or fellow seminarian) **and** submit a Verbatim report for each of these exercises. These exercises are designed to assist you in your growth as a pastoral counselor. Please make sure the counselee has a copy of the instructions for the assignment.

Note 1: Papers will contain the following elements:

- 1 page introductory material,
- A counseling transcript (as per format provided). **These transcripts are to contain 15 counseling responses by the student.**
- 1-2 pp. of reflection on the session (as per format provided).

Note 2: It is expected that the student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of basic counseling responses by accurately identifying which basic counseling skills are evident in this transcript.

Note 3: It is expected that the student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of Kollar’s model by accurately identifying which aspects of Kollar’s model are evident in this transcript.

Note 4: Students are not permitted to submit a verbatim of an actual counseling session with someone they may be working with or who has sought their advice.

Submission Guidelines: Practice counseling assignments are to be submitted in electronic form (MSWord, Open Office documents work best) as email attachments on the due date, no later than 12 p.m. (noon). The signed declaration is to be either scanned and sent as an email attachment, or faxed to the professor (the fax number will be provided on the first day of class). Graded papers will be returned to the student with comments in pdf format.

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a. Practice Counselling Assignment #1 (20%) **Due: Feb 19, 2011**Instructions to the Student:

This is to be a **first session**. It is assumed that you only have superficial knowledge (if any) of the other person. Your task in this assignment is to: a) connect with the counselee, b) determine why they came for counselling, and c) use Kollar's model to guide you.

Instructions to the Counselee:

These instructions have been kept brief so that you, the counselee, can create the script as you go. It is very important you DO NOT tell the practice counsellor ahead of time what type of client you are going to be. It is part of the student's learning process to discern this from his/her interaction with you.

In this exercise the counsellor will be trying to "connect" with you. All s/he knows is you want to talk to him/her about something. Your task is to provide a "realistic" practice session for the counsellor. It is to his/her benefit that you do not make the situation too easy. You need to be careful, however, that you do not unnecessarily frustrate the practice counsellor. You can bring any situation you want (i.e. self-esteem issues, parenting problems, spouse is unfaithful, depression, spiritual coldness, etc.). You decide: how nervous you will be, whether you will trust this counsellor with your secret, how much you will tell in the first session, or if you will 'test' the counsellor.

b. Practice Counselling Assignment #2 (30%) **Due: Mar 19, 2011**Instructions to the Student:

This is to be a **follow-up session** with the same counselee from Practice Assignment #1. Your task in this assignment is to: a) reconnect with the counselee, and, b) use Kollar's model to guide your work.

Instructions to the Counselee:

These instructions have been kept brief so that you, the counselee, can create the script as you go. It is very important you DO NOT tell the practice counsellor ahead of time what type of client you are going to be or what may have transpired in your life since the first session. It is part of the student's learning process to discern this from his/her interaction with you.

In this exercise the counsellor will be trying to "reconnect" with you. One of the things s/he will be interested in is whether or not your situation has worsened, remained the same or improved (the choice is entirely yours) since your last counselling session. Your task is to provide a "realistic" practice session for the counsellor. It is to his/her benefit that you do not make the situation too easy. You need to be careful, however, that you do not unnecessarily frustrate the practice counsellor. You can bring any situation you want (i.e. self-esteem issues, parenting problems, spouse is unfaithful, depression, spiritual coldness, etc.). You decide: how nervous you will be, whether you will trust this counsellor with your secret, how much you will tell in the first session, or if you will 'test' the counsellor.

4. Critical Reflection on Pastoral Diagnosis (20%) **Due: Apr 2, 2011**

Write a critical review (approximately 8-10 pp) of Nancy Ramsay's book *Pastoral Diagnosis: A Resource for Ministries of Care and Counseling* and reflect on the relative strengths/weaknesses of employing the

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model described in chapters 1 and 2. **NOTE:** This assignment is to reflect on Ramsay's method, not her theology.

Your review will consider **one** of the following three options:

- Examine the text as a whole. e.g., “Does Ramsay’s argument demonstrate internal consistency?” “Does the author adequately demonstrate how her theological criteria apply to the themes she discusses?”
- Focus primarily on the model presented in chs. 1-2. Students who chose this option may elect to examine one of the following:
 - Critique Ramsay’s treatment of the Reformed paradigm and her use of that paradigm to dialogue with the embedded values of the medical, humanistic, and transgenerational approaches to counseling; or,
 - Draw on another Statement of Faith, preferably that of the student’s home church or denomination, and discuss the potential strengths or shortcomings of using the doctrines contained in that Statement of Faith to dialogue with the embedded values of the medical, humanistic, and transgenerational approaches to counseling.

Submission Guidelines: Critical Reflection assignments are to be submitted in electronic form (MSWord, Open Office documents work best) as email attachments on the due date, no later than 12 p.m. (noon).

College Style for Submission of Written Work:

All written work—unless informed otherwise by the professor—is to be submitted in accordance with the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses*, available on the McMaster Divinity College web-site.

Statement On Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one’s academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy - <http://www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php>.

Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

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Select Bibliography:

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