Northern Seminary  
PC 302 INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING  
Spring 2015  
Thursdays, 7:00 – 9:40 pm  
Jill Sidler Fleagle, DMin  
jfleagle@faculty.seminary.edu  
815-353-0713

Course Description

Through this introductory course, students will gain a basic knowledge of family systems thinking. The class will think theologically about the meaning and practice of pastoral counseling and each student will develop her or his own understanding of the meaning and place of pastoral counseling within their ministry context. Students will develop an understanding of salient and typical issues in pastoral counseling and develop skills in the practice of pastoral counseling.

Students will be expected to engage in intellectual, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-reflection regarding the theory and practice of pastoral counseling. The learning process will include readings, reading response papers, instruction, handouts, discussion, and reflection along with participation in experiential learning opportunities during class sessions.

Course Goals

1. To gain a basic knowledge of theory, theology, and practice of pastoral counseling.
2. To develop basic pastoral counseling skills.
3. To develop personal understanding and self-awareness of one’s self as a pastoral counselor.
4. To identify the limits of counseling in the congregational setting and appropriate ethical standards in counseling.
5. To develop some understanding of the impact of cultural differences on pastoral counseling.
6. To integrate learning from this course with one’s broader theological and biblical learning in seminary.

Required Reading


Bibliography


**Student Requirements**

1. Weekly class attendance and participation - students are expected to discuss the reading, demonstrate self-reflection and participate in counseling exercises.

2. Required reading completed before each class.

3. Weekly papers in response to class reading are to be 3 to 5 pages in length. These papers are to demonstrate serious engagement with the reading material. The paper is not to be a summary of the reading, but a reflection on the reading that includes a personal response to the reading. The student’s thoughts, feelings, and questions about practical application and spiritual reflections may all be part of these papers. All work is to be uploaded to Moodle as well as brought to class and submitted in paper form.

4. In-class counseling exercises. Professor will provide pastoral counseling scenarios for the students to engage with through role-play in dyads or triads. Class members will discuss the experience.

5. Final project is preparation of a genogram due and presented on the final day of class.

6. All written work is expected to be done with correct grammar and syntax. Sources that are quoted or paraphrased must be acknowledged in the paper. It is expected that each student understands and adheres to the seminary’s guidelines on academic honesty.

**Tentative Class Schedule**

**Week 1**

Introduction to the course and guidelines for engagement, including the requirement of confidentiality and mutual respect among participants. Discussion of counseling, pastoral counseling and ethics. Introduction to Required Reading and review of Bibliography. **Homework for Week 2: Read the Introduction and Sections One and Two of Generation to Generation, and write a reading response paper for each Section (two reading response papers due Week 2).**
For Section One, write a 3-page reading response paper on the five basic concepts of family systems theory, and be ready to discuss Sections One and Two in class.

Week 2 Discussion of Sections One and Two of *Generation to Generation*. Introduction to essential elements of the therapeutic relationship, and ethical considerations. **Homework for Week 3: Read Section Three of *Generation to Generation*, and write reading response paper.**

Week 3 Discussion of Section Three of *Generation to Generation*. Introduction to Assertiveness and Active Listening Skills. Class practice exercise. **Homework for Week 4: Read Section Four of *Generation to Generation*, and write reading response paper.**

Week 4 Discussion of Section Four of *Generation to Generation*. Introduction to goals and interventions in conflict and crisis situations. Class practice exercise. **Homework for Week 5: Read *Pastoral Counseling across Cultures* – chapter(s) applicable to personal ministry situation – and write reading response paper.**

Week 5 Student presentations of reading reflection papers. Introduction to tools for premarital and marital counseling. Class practice exercise. **Homework for Week 6: Read Introduction and Part One of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, and write reading response paper.**

Week 6 Discussion of reading assignment from *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. In-class reading: *Good Grief*. Introduction to counseling for loss and grief. Class practice exercise. **Homework for Week 7: Read Part Two of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, and write reading response paper.**

Week 7 Discussion of reading assignment from *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Handouts: Healthy Family Characteristics, and Healthy Church Family Characteristics. **Homework for Week 8: Read Part One of *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*, and write reading response paper.**

Week 8 Discussion of reading assignment from *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*. Introduction to counseling for anxiety and depression. Class practice exercise. **Homework for Week 9: Read Part Two of *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*, and write reading response paper.**
Week 9 Discussion of reading assignment from *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*. Instruction to begin preparation of genogram. **Homework for Week 10:** Read Part Three of *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times*, and write a reading response paper. Complete genogram for presentation and submission on final day of class.

Week 10 Class presentation of genograms. Review and summary.

**Grading**
Grades are calculated by percentage of completion according to adherence to seminary standards and Student Requirements as printed in this syllabus with the following breakdown:

Weekly reading and response papers with participation in class discussion – 50%.

Participation in counseling exercises – 25%.

Final genogram project – 25%.

**Grading Scale**

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**POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES**

**NOTE:** All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account. Contact ithelpdesk@seminary.edu if you need help forwarding your seminary email address to your personal email address.

As a seminary community we hold integrity/hospitality as core values. Individuals are able to do their best work and thinking when their peers are fully present and engaged. We expect each person to both participate in class and carefully listen to others with the belief that everyone’s contribution is equally important. Therefore, the following policies have been established in order to provide clarity in regard to attendance expectations and relationships in the classroom.

**Diploma/Certificate Student Course Requirements**
The amount of work required of Diploma/Certificate students will be at the discretion of the professor. Students will be responsible for contacting the professor about what assignments are required.
**Class Attendance Policy**

It is expected that students will attend and participate in all class sessions. Failure to attend at least 80% of class sessions is grounds for automatic failure. A professor may set other attendance expectations. Students are always expected to communicate with a professor in advance if they will be absent. Attendance expectations are higher for online and intensive courses (see syllabus for specific requirements).

**Class Tardiness Policy**

The third time a student is late to the start of class, it will be counted as a class absence. It is also expected that students will return from a break by the time specified by the professor.

**Late Work Policy**

If a student cannot complete the work for a course by the due date listed on the syllabus, they must submit a “Request for a Grade of Incomplete” form to the Registrar by 4:30 of the last day of the term. The form must be signed by the instructor and Dean of Students. The professor may set stipulations and grade reductions. In the absence of a formal request form, the student will receive a grade based upon work completed by the last day of the term.

**Turabian Format**

All papers, including footnotes and bibliography, must be submitted in the correct format according to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th ed., 2013.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgement or documentation. See the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Seminary Catalog for more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

**Electronic Format**

Unless otherwise specified by the professor, all work submitted electronically must be in a Word document format (.doc, .docx).

**Technology Use in the Classroom**

Unless it is directly tied to note-taking or research for the class, students are expected to refrain from using cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class.

**Course Evaluation in Moodle**

Students must complete an online course evaluation using the seminary Moodle system at [http://moodle.seminary.edu](http://moodle.seminary.edu). The evaluation will be open at the end of the course. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to moodlehelp@seminary.edu.