

# BRIERCREST

## CO 710 Crisis and Grief Counselling Fall 2019

Professor: Dr. Bill Webster, BA, BD, DMin, FT  
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Course Dates: December 9-13, 2019

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This study of the dynamics, techniques, and guidelines for grief and crisis counselling emphasizes crisis and grief as a process (i.e., loss of spouse) and looks at the dynamics of suicidal or domestic crisis.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

This course will examine the effects of loss and how such experiences can impact the lives and the coping mechanisms of those affected. It will enable students to understand the grief process and several strategies and methods of intervention, both individual and community based. We will examine the criteria and effects of complicated mourning and compare Anticipatory Grief with Sudden and Unexpected Death. It will define and examine crisis and look at ways of assisting people in crisis as well as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing strategies which can be used with professionals.

The course will give students specific strategies to effectively develop a grief support component to their ministry in the Church and in the community.

While this course will examine many psychological, psychosocial and sociological aspects of the topic, it will be placed firmly on a Biblical foundation, allowing students to develop both a theology of ministry in this area and a specific strategy whereby they can effectively minister to people in grief and crisis, whether through individual counseling or by group support methods, both of which will be examined and discussed. The course will seek to give both a theoretical and a practical foundation for those who will minister to grieving people.

### COURSE TEXTS

Therese A. Rando: *How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies* (New York: Bantam 1991)

H. Norman Wright: *New Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling* (ISBN 0-8307-1611-4)

Dr Bill Webster: *Understanding Bereavement* (ISBN 0-9697841-9-7)

(Dr. Webster has kindly agreed to allow Briercrest to post this book on Canvas)

**Study Notes:** Dr. Webster has prepared a workbook of seminar notes and outlines for students, which includes his manual under the title "The Guide to Good Grief Groups" which is used in conjunction with his book "Understanding Bereavement." This will be posted on Canvas. While not

designated as mandatory reading, it is strongly recommended that students obtain this resource which will be useful in class, as well as in the future ministry to grieving people.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.mybriercrest.ca/seminary/documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

### Other Suggested Preparatory and/or Optional Reading

Bill Webster: *When Someone You Care About Dies* (ISBN 0-9697841-4-7)  
(order through Dr. Webster)

Bill Webster: *Help Me, If You Can* (ISBN 0-9697841-7-1)  
(order through [www.griefjourney.com](http://www.griefjourney.com))

C.S. Lewis: *The Problem of Pain* (New York: The MacMillan Company 1962)

Henri J. Nouwen: *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Science* (New York: Doubleday 1979)

J. William Worden: *Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*  
(New York: Springer 1982)

### COURSE OUTCOMES

- To offer a learning opportunity combining theology, therapeutic theory and practice by which a model of ministry to people in grief and crisis may be developed.
- To understand the effects and scope of crisis and grieving on the everyday lives of people.
- To understand the dynamics of crisis situations and grief responses, examine specific challenges of ministry in such situations, and develop effective therapeutic strategies.
- To recognize the differences in situations that may be described as "normal", complicated, traumatic and pathological.
- To engage in theological reflection on suffering (grief, pain, loss, etc.) and to discover a biblical base for addressing these issues.
- To identify and explore the telling of story as a tool in ministry.
- To explore our own experiences of loss, grief and crisis, and the implications of the concept of "wounded healer".

Dr. Webster will utilize a variety of tools to facilitate this learning opportunity, including the use of video, case studies, personal reflection, role playing, interview, as well as theoretical input and discussion. His goal is to create an interactive atmosphere in which we can learn from his information, from our own life stories, our theological reflection, and from personal reading and research.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### *Pre-Course Assignments:*

**Book Reviews:** Write a review of TWO text books.

- Therese A. Rando: *How to Go on Living When Someone You Love Dies*
- H. Norman Wright: *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*

Your review should not simply be a summary of the content but give an in-depth description of what the book is seeking to teach, where you agree and disagree, of your learnings, and what these would suggest to you in terms of developing a ministry to people in such a situation.

Length: 3-4 pages for each review

**DUE DATES:** ONE book review (Therese A. Rando's book) is due by the first day of class, December 9, 2019. The remaining book review is due by the end of class on Friday, December 13, 2019.

### *Mid-Course Assignments:*

#### **Reflecting on your own loss history:**

You will be asked to do a personal loss history and reflect on the experience. This will be a classroom project, with review work that evening. The written report will be **due by the end of class on Friday, December 13, 2019.**

### *Post-Course Assignments:*

#### **Case Study:**

You will prepare for and conduct an assessment interview of 60 - 90 minutes of someone about a significant loss or crisis that has affected them. Try to make this a real-life situation, while observing the appropriate ethics of the academic setting. You will prepare a list of questions you might want to ask to make an appropriate assessment and recommendations for a counselling intervention.

You will write a report summarizing the discussion, reflecting on the effectiveness of the interview, and suggesting what counselling interventions you might recommend. **You will be marked on the merits of the MODEL you develop**, not on how well the interview goes.

(Fuller details of the interview process will be given in class on Tuesday.)

**This project is due by February 7, 2020.**

#### **Major Project:**

During the week of class, you will identify an area of interest in grief or crisis that you would like to focus on for your paper. You will prepare a **written one-page abstract**, outlining your theme and the direction of your project as you see it, and **present these abstracts on Friday morning**. There will be a 5% penalty for abstracts not received. On approval, you will prepare an academic paper of 3000-4000 words, **clearly** reflecting research from **several** varied disciplines, which might include theology, philosophy, and the social sciences, around your chosen theme. The criteria of this paper should be to thoroughly research and examine the problem, it's social, theological, practical and theoretical implications, and suggest appropriate, replicable models of counselling ministry for a church, community or counselling setting. Your paper must include a comprehensive annotated bibliography and show evidence that your research reflects the bibliography.

**This project due by February 7, 2020.**

**Grading:**

1. Book Reviews	25%
2. Loss History Reflection	10%
3. Case Study	25%
4. Major Paper	40%

**SEMINARY CALENDAR**

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/academics/calendar/>.

***Attendance Policy***

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

***Course Schedules***

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

***Academic Honesty***

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 24-25 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Director of Student Success in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca](mailto:studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).