

BRIERCREST

THEO 759 Theology Specialty: Theology and the Practice of Counselling Spring 2020

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Course Dates: May 11–15, 2020

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This iteration of THEO 759 (Theology Specialty) is an investigation of the interplay between the disciplines of Theology and Counselling. Specific attention is given to the way in which theological anthropology animates contemporary counselling practice, and also, the manner in which contemporary counselling models can inform and develop theological understanding.



INSTRUCTORS' INTRODUCTION

Counselling and soul care has been a task of the Christian church from its inception. Over the centuries the church has developed a rich resource and heritage about the reasons, the challenges and the methods of caring for people. With the advent of the modern era, significant contributions to the theory and practice of soul care, soul cure, and psychotherapy, have come from outside the Christian church and often from sources hostile to the Christian context. As Christian practitioners have studied and often adopted these theories and practices, the question of their acceptability, congruence or incongruence with biblical values has often been raised. Answers have ranged from total exclusion of “secular” practices to exclusive reliance on them to the near exclusion of biblically informed ideas about the work of soul care.

This course is intended to consider the various views as to how to integrate, or not, these various sources of ideas about the work of counselling. What does the Bible teach about how to care for one another, especially regarding the role of the shepherd? How shall secular approaches to counselling be viewed, adopted (or not) and on what basis?

COURSE TEXTS

Johnson, E. L., and Myers, D. G. (2010) *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*. Spectrum Multiview Books. (320 pages).

Students may choose one of the following texts (either Jensen or Lambert):

Jensen, Peter. (1991), *At the Heart of the Universe: What Christians Believe*. InterVarsity Press. (172 pages).

OR:

Lambert, Heath (2016), *A Theology of Biblical Counselling: Doctrinal Foundations for Counselling Ministry* (335 Pages)

Johnson, Eric L. (2017), *God and Soul Care: The Therapeutic Resources of the Christian Faith*. IVP Academic. (721 Pages)

The above texts, with the exception of Jensen, are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore:
<http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Berg, S. (2015) "Can Christians do narrative therapy? Original goodness instead of original sin as the starting point for therapy and theology". *The EMCAPP Journal: Christian Psychology around the world*, 7, 44-53. And, Monroe, P. (2015) Comment, 55-56. [Available on Canvas]

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

McMinn, Mark R., and Campbell, Clark D. (2007) *Integrative psychotherapy: Toward a comprehensive Christian approach*. IVP Academic.

Tripp, Paul David. (2002), *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change*. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.

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/>.

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.

Special Note for THEO 759: Assignment formatting is dependent upon the student's selected major. For THEO students, please use Chicago. For MAMFT students, APA.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- 1) Students will develop and articulate a theological paradigm that both supports and informs their practice of soul-care.
- 2) Students will become familiar with the divergent approaches to integrating theology and counselling and will generate works of critical reflection that speak to both the advantages and disadvantages of particular models.

- 3) Students will become more confident in their ability to integrate the two disciplines of theology and counselling, so as to further their vocational effectiveness.
- 4) Finally, students will gain an understanding of some of the ethical dimensions that come to bear upon the integration of theology and counselling and will thoughtfully consider these dimensions as they engage in the practice of counselling in any given vocational context.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

A topic specific outline and content map will be provided in advance of class on Canvas. Consult the "files" section on Canvas for updates.

ASSIGNMENTS

Pre-Course Assignments:

Reading Precis, Critique, and Completion – 10%

Students will read all three of the compulsory ("course") texts for THEO 759. Students must select **one** text for **each** of the following tasks: a **2-page** precis, a **2-page** critique and a completion acknowledgment (**4 pages total**). For example: the student may choose to write a precis of Johnson and Meyers, *5 Views*; a critique of Jenson's *At the Heart of the Universe*; and an acknowledgement that they have completed reading Johnson's *God and Soul Care*. Students may choose any configuration of the above texts for the required tasks. The reading completion acknowledgement must be a signed attestation. Students are to submit the three required elements in **one document** to Canvas.

Reading Precis, Critique, and Completion Due: 11 May 2020

Reflection on the Integration of Theology and Counselling – 15%

Students are to write a **3-page** paper reflecting upon their experience with, and understanding of, the integration of theology and counselling. This is not a research paper, and students are encouraged to be candid concerning their own ideas, considerations, and perhaps even hesitations with respect to the relationship between theology and counselling. Students may draw on past experience either giving or receiving counsel (yet must maintain appropriate confidentiality) and may opine on their present beliefs about why it is necessary, or not, to integrate the two disciplines. Students will be expected to share the results of this paper with the class, in both corporate and break-out sessions, as well as submit it to Canvas.

Reflection Paper Due: 11 May 2020

Mid-Course Assignments:

Seminar Presentations: Five Views – 15%

Students will, in groups corresponding to the total class number, present the contents of the reading from Johnson and Meyers, *Psychology and Christianity: 5 Views* for the day (1 "view" per day of class) and lead the class in a discussion. Students are expected to develop seminar-level

presentations which include, but are not limited to, appropriate visuals (e.g. power-point), suitable handouts and appropriate facilitation of class interaction (suggestions for discussion, in-class activities, etc.).

Students will be evaluated for their ability to comprehensively account for the contents of their respective view. Additionally, creativity and quality of presentation will account for the grade constitution. Groups will be selected by the instructors and announced via Canvas. In preparation for this presentation, students are advised to be well-read in *5 Views* and prepared to communicate with each other in advance of their presentation. A suitable presentation will run between 60-75 minutes of class time. Finally, students will submit their presentation materials to the instructors of record for final evaluation.

5 Views Presentations: 11-15 May 2020

In-Class Participation – 5%

THEO 759: Theology and the Practice of Counselling maintains a distinctly praxis-oriented posture, meaning that students are required to integrate their “head-knowledge” with in-class activities. Consequently, students will be required to engage in a number of “hands on” events throughout the course. These include but are not limited to: the public recitation of Scripture, engaging with in-class and out-of-class assignments, and small group discussion. These activities are in addition to the regularly expected in-class contributions (both verbally or submitted in writing). If students have concerns about any of the above activities, they are encouraged to approach the instructors of record at their earliest convenience in order to develop an alternate form of participation.

In Class Participation is Evaluated Throughout the Course

Post-Course Assignments:

Practitioner Interview and Assessment – 35%

The integration between Theology and Counselling can assume a number of different vocational forms—from pastoral ministry, to chaplaincy, to professional practice. The student will select and approach a Counsellor who self-identifies as a Christian and engage them in an interview and will summarize their results in a **5-page paper**. The purpose of this interview is to gather “real-world” data on the practices and approach of counsellors who consider their theological paradigm to be an important aspect of their work. Students are required to design their own interview questions in advance. Students will be assessed on the creativity of their approach, as well as thoughtful, engaging questions. In the paper itself, students will appropriately taxonomize the approach of their interviewee (according to Johnson and Meyers, *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*), taking care not to be unduly critical, but rather, receptive to possible insights to any given approach. The paper must synthesize both the interview questions and responses, as well as the student’s insights, critiques and reflections, and should be submitted to Canvas.

Practitioner Interview and Assessment Due: 10 July 2020

The Sufficiency of Scripture and the Practice of Counselling – 20%

Perspectives on the relationship between Theology and Counselling abound, yet the question must be asked: “what is the proper relationship between *scripture and counselling*?” From the answer to this foundational question a number of different schools of thought flow. The student is to draft a **5-page paper** detailing *their view* on the nature of scripture in relation to their counselling practice. Questions that may be considered include: is scripture *alone* sufficient to provide counsel? Is *all* of Scripture necessary, or just portions? How might the thoughtful counsellor determine which texts are most appropriate and which are not? If Scripture must be supplemented in some way for the counselling enterprise to be successful, what might that supplementation look like? Is the scriptural portrayal of humanity’s fundamental plight an accurate one? Finally, dependent upon the student’s argument, a conclusion that focuses upon the implications for an evangelical doctrine of scripture is required. The paper should be submitted to Canvas.

Sufficiency of Scripture and the Practice of Counselling Paper Due: 10 July 2020

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 the Academic Resource Centre in person (L234 in the Library), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email (academicresourcecentre@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY**Historical Overview***General Texts*

- Entwistle, D. (2015) *Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.
- Tillich, E. (1966) *The Future of Religions*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Psychoanalytic Psychology

- Freud, S. (2012) *The Future of an Illusion*. Buffalo, NY: Broadview Editions.
- Jung, G.C. (1995) *Jung: On Christianity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Developmental Psychology

- Erikson, E. (1963) *Childhood and Society*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Piaget, J. (2013) *The Moral Judgement of the Child*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Behavioral Psychology

- Hayes, S.C., Barnes-Holmes, D., & Roche, B. (2001) *Relational Frame Theory: A Post-Skinnerian Account of Human Language and Cognition*. Berlin, DE: Springer
- Skinner, B.F. (2002) *Beyond Freedom & Dignity*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company Inc.
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- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Humanistic Psychology

Rogers, C. (1989) *On Becoming a Person; A Therapist's View of Psychotherapy*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Rogers, C. (1995) *A Way of Being*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Cognitive Psychology

Edgley, A. (2015) *Noam Chomsky*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan

Piaget, J. (2013) *The Moral Judgement of the Child*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Existential Psychology

Frankl, V. E. (1984) *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston, MA: Pocket Books.

May, R. (1969) *Love and Will*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Evolutionary Psychology

Bering, J. (2011) *The Belief Instinct: The Psychology of Souls, Destiny, and the Meaning of Life*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.

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Tremlin, T. (2006) *Minds and Gods: The Cognitive Foundations of Religion*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Narrative Psychology

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Third-Wave Psychology

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- Clinebell, H. (1984) *Basic types of pastoral care and counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing and growth*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Collins, G. R. (1980) *Christian counseling: A comprehensive guide*. Waco, TX: Word

Lenses of Interpretation

- Bland, E., & Strawn, B. (2014) *Christianity & Psychoanalysis: A New Conversation*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press
- Blazer, D. (1998) *Freud vs God: How Psychiatry Lost its Soul and Christianity Lost its Mind*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press
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- Sbanotto, E.A.N., Davediuk, H., & Gingrich, F.C. (2016) *Skills for Effective Counseling: A Faith-Based Integration*. Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
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Theological Anthropology

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Theology of Counselling

Theology of Hope

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Theology of Suffering

- Harrigan, J., & Brogdan, D. (2019) *The Gospel of Christ Crucified: A Theology of Suffering Before Glory*. Fayetteville, AR: Paroikos Publishing.
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Theology of Redemption

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Theology of Healing

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