

# BRIERCREST

## CO 606 Marriage and Family Therapy Fall 2021

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Course Dates: October 25 – 29, 2021  
3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will provide a comprehensive survey and substantive understanding of the major models of couple, marriage, and family therapy.

**Prerequisite:** CO 603 Foundations of Marriage and Family Therapy

### COURSE INTEGRATION

An examination of Biblically congruent and systemically oriented practices intended to aid individuals, couples and families in their preferred ways of relating. We will discuss husband/wife, parent/child and inter-generational relationships, from biblical, systemic and narrative perspectives. As well, we will consider family structures and cultural and societal influences on the family.

### COURSE TEXTS

Balswick, Jack O., and Balswick, Judith K. (2014). *The family: A Christian perspective on the contemporary home, fourth edition*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker.

Berg, S. (1994). *Sexuality and Spirituality: An exploration of our sex-affirming Hebraic roots through a reconsideration of several biblical passages*. (Available on Canvas)

Mate, G. (1999). *Scattered minds: A new look at the origins and healing of attention deficit disorder*. Toronto: Random House. (Parts 1-4).

Nichols, Michael P. and Davis, Sean (2017). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods, Eleventh Edition (or later.)* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Schnarch, D.M. (1991) *Constructing the sexual crucible: An integration of sexual and marital therapy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Ch. 17 - Sexuality and spirituality. (Reserve self, Canvas).

Tomm, K., St. George, S., Wulff, D., and Strong, T. (2014) *Patterns in interpersonal interactions: Inviting relational understandings for therapeutic change*. New York: Routledge (Read the Introduction, and chapters. 1, 2, and 6) ISBN #:978-0-415-70283-6 (pbk)

*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.

## COURSE OUTCOMES

### 1. Thinking

- A thorough acquaintance with family systems theory.
- A concrete biblical and systemic understanding of marriage, family and parenting.
- Some familiarity with an intervention model for working with couples.
- An exploration of issues related to parenting and family life.

### 2. Valuing and Feeling

- A sense of awe at the profundity of human relating.
- Growing enthusiasm for working with couple, marriage, and family relationships.

### 3. Skill

- The development of an ability to think biblically, systemically and narratively about marriage and family issues.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

- I. Introduction to Marriage and Family
  - A. The concept of systems
  - B. Historical overview
- II. The Family
  - A. The significant Biblical texts
    1. Genesis 5 and the other genealogies
    2. Matthew 1:1-17
  - B. Survey of systemic approaches
- III. Marriage
  - A. The significant Biblical texts
    1. Genesis 1-3
    2. Song of Solomon
    3. I Corinthians 7:1-7
    4. Ephesians 5:21-33
  - B. The marital ideal: To be "naked and not ashamed."
    1. Intimacy
    2. Sexuality
    3. Communication
  - C. The marital task: Lifelong growth towards the ideal
  - D. Introduction to Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT)
- IV. Parenting
  - A. The significant Biblical texts
    1. Ephesians 6:1-3
    2. Colossians 3:20-21
  - B. The parental task
  - C. Introduction to Parenting training

## V. Doing marriage and family therapy

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

***Pre-Course Assignments:***

1. Pre-course Reading: Read each of the assigned readings and write a reflection totaling 1000 words indicating key learnings from each.  
Value: 10%  
Due: **October 25, 2021**

***Post-Course Assignments:***

2. An exegetical and practical treatment of Ephesians 5:18-32. (If you prefer to work on a different text, please consult with the instructor). An exegesis is a "reading out" of the text's meaning. The paper will examine the text in its literary, cultural, and canonical context, paying special attention to the meanings of the words used. It will conclude with an incisive discussion of the text's meaning for today in the form of a sermon or lesson outline. In your exegetical research, be sure to consult several recently published commentaries.  
Length: 2000 words  
Value: 30%  
Due Date: **December 24, 2021**
  
3. A major paper on the topic, "A Biblical and Systemic Understanding of Marriage and Family." The intent of this paper is to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of family systems theory, the biblical texts, and an integration of the ideas of these two areas. The paper should cover the following areas and follow the outline suggested below. This is only a suggested outline.
  - A. Systemic ideas
    1. Historical antecedents of systems theory
    2. Systemic principles related to marriage and family  
(A distillation and summary from the various approaches indicating the essence of systems theory, especially Bowen's thinking.)
  - B. Biblical ideas
    1. Exegetical Survey of the biblical texts pertinent to marriage and family life, specifically the ones covered in the course, including family, marriage, and parenting.
    2. Biblical principles related to marriage and family  
(A distillation and summary of the teachings of the pertinent texts.)
  - C. Integration of Biblical and systemic ideas  
(A description of the points of intersections of ideas in the two fields.)

The paper will build on class lectures and will demonstrate your thinking based on reading that will produce a bibliography of at least 15 references in addition

to the recommended reading. Please include a comprehensive Table of Contents at the beginning of the paper.

Length: 2500 words on typed, double-spaced pages

Value: 60%

Due Date: **December 24, 2021**

## 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***

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

### ***Modular Courses***

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent 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 (1) 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.

### ***Online Courses***

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. 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.

### ***Semester-Based Courses***

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

### ***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 ([egordon@briercrest.ca](mailto:egordon@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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