

BRIERCREST

CO 603 Foundations of Marriage and Family Therapy Winter 2022

Professor: Sam Berg, DMin, RMFT
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Course Dates: January 31 – February 4, 2022

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a survey of ideas and praxis essential for marriage and family therapy. The content will include theological, psychosocial, systems, and constructivist perspectives.

COURSE INTEGRATION

The purpose of this course is to set a direction for the development of counsellors that will help students in their future training. It provides an integrated body of knowledge and thought, including theological and biblical foundations and individualist and systemic theories of human behaviour that lays the bedrock for understanding people, problems and how people change.

REQUIRED READING: COURSE TEXTS

Berg, S. (1983). *A theology for marriage and family*. Unpublished paper. (This paper will be posted on Canvas.)

Berg, S. (2015) Can Christians do Narrative Therapy? Original goodness instead of Original Sin as the Starting Point for Therapy and Theology. Presentation to the Canadian-American Theological Association annual conference 2015.

Grenz, S. (2001). *The social God and the relational self: A trinitarian theology of the imago Dei*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, c2001.

Knudson-Martin, C., McDowell, T., and Bermudez, J. M. (2019). From knowing to doing: Guidelines for socioculturally attuned family therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 45, 1, 45-60.

Morgan, A. (2000). *What is narrative therapy: An easy-to-read introduction*. Adelaide, AU: Dulwich Centre Publications.

McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., Garcia-Petro, N. (2005). *Ethnicity and family therapy*. New York, NY: Guilford. (Read the Overview: Ethnicity and family therapy, and the chapter relating to your own ethnic background).

Nichols, M. P., and Davis, S. D. (2016) *Family Therapy: Concepts and methods, twelfth edition*. Boston: Pearson. Read the Introduction, chapter 2, Fundamental Concepts; chapter 4, Bowen Family Systems; and chapter 13, Narrative Therapy.

Note: This textbook is only available for purchase as an e-text through the Pearson website at: <https://www.pearson.com/us/search-results-higher-education.html?charset=UTF-8&q=Family+therapy%3A+Concepts+and+methods+by+Nichols+and+Davis>

Thompson, C. (2010) *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices That Can Transform Your Life and Relationships*. Carrollton, TX: Tyndale House Publishers.

ALSO RECOMMENDED:

Crabb, L (2013). *Understanding people: Why we long for relationship*. Zondervan.

Polkinghorne, J. C. (2005) *Exploring Reality: The Intertwining of Science and Religion*. Yale University Press.

McDowell et al (2018) Ch. 13 Socioculturally Attuned Narrative Family Therapy, in Teresa McDowell, Carmen Knudson-Martin, and J. Maria Bermudez (2018) *Socioculturally Attuned Family Therapy Guidelines for Equitable Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth edition (2011). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. **Please note** that the instructor expects assignments to conform to the standards within the APA manual (See page 41 and following for samples).

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. The student will consider issues in historical and cultural influences on the nature of family.
2. The student will develop an integrated understanding of biblical anthropology, psychodynamic and systems theories, and the ideas underlying the narrative approach to counselling.
3. The student will develop a biblical, theological, and psychological theoretical foundation for the professional skills required to engage in the practice of counselling.
4. The student will develop a growing ability to recognize the power of language and narrative to construct our perceptions of our world and an ability to wonder about and question those perceptions.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

1. Introduction to marriage and family counselling
2. A biblical anthropology: Created in the Image of God
3. The systemic and relational component: Family systems theory
4. The psychodynamic component: Thinking, feeling, and doing
5. The Narrative Therapy component: Storied lives

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

This course will use an eclectic approach to teaching with traditional lecture style classes, group work, and classroom discussion. Learning happens when we engage with the course content in dialogue with others who are engaged in the same content. While students will not be graded on class participation, they will be encouraged to participate in various ways.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must adhere to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th edition publication guidelines and should be submitted to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

Required readings – 20%

Write a brief synopsis (i.e., one or two paragraphs) of each of the required readings. Include a description of the contents, a sentence of appreciation, and a critique or question of the author for each.

Length: the entire submission should be no more than 3-5 pages.

Due: **January 31, 2022**

Mid-Course Assignments:

Story presentation: - 30%

This component of the course introduces the student to the matter of the “person-of-the-counsellor.” A key resource for the counsellor is her or his self-hood, the personal qualities, and the life-stories that have produced each person. It is critical for effective counsellors to “know thyself” as Socrates put it, and to “search one’s heart”, as the psalmist put it (4:4). Each student will produce a paper to be presented during the classroom portion of the course. Issues like professional presence, evidence of insight into personal story, use of resources and presentation space will all be factors in assessment of presentations. The presentations will be made in the context of smaller groups into which the class will be divided. The presentation will include the following elements:

- **Public Story:** These are the basic public facts about yourself much like what you would do in a job interview or visiting with a stranger that included professional and personal strengths and interests.
- **Private Story:** These include some personal facts about yourself much like those things that a good friend or close family member would know. Be sure to incorporate insights you have gleaned from your readings.
 1. Ancestral history, beliefs and personality;
 2. Assessment of how your ethnicity and family of origin influence your worldview (use the textbook *Ethnicity and Family Therapy* to help with this);
 3. Present a genogram of your life and family relationships (use the Docket article as well as the ideas from *Genograms* to help with this). In particular, use relational lines to describe the triangles and inter-generational patterns that you find. As well, recognize strengths and unique outcomes that are included in your family of origin.
- **Transformational Story:** Include some personal experiences about struggles or changes that have occurred in your life. This may be your faith story or some other meaningful and personal growth area within your life. Be sure to incorporate insights you have gleaned from your readings.

- Sacred Story: Share with the class the story of "WHO I AM". Include within this:
 1. A current view of yourself including beliefs, actions, goals;
 2. Be sure to discuss future plans, directions and plans for dealing with your own mortality (and that of other family members);
 3. Summarize your "story" and how you will "re-author" it in the future.

Procedure: The class will be divided into groups of 4-5 for the purpose of presentations. At the beginning of each day, we will take 15-20 minutes for presentations in groups. Be prepared.

Length of submitted paper: 3-5 pages

Due: As soon after the presentation as possible, but ultimately **April 1, 2022** (no fooling 😊).

Post-Course Assignments:

Integration Research Paper – 50%

Students will prepare a research paper (12-15 pages) within the theme: *The Theology of Marriage and Family for a family therapist*. The options for this paper are intentionally broad to allow the student an opportunity to choose and explore an issue of interest that can inform and guide family therapy. Incorporating biblical data, discuss basic issues of human creaturehood, gender roles, perspectives of companionship and love, marriage and family, or some other issue of interest. In preparing this paper, it may be helpful to explore various denominational perspectives and theological interpretations of the topic. You may use the paper by S. Berg (1983) as an illustration of what such a paper may include. Include reflections on your own life as they occur during your writing. Students are required to consult the instructor about their topic of choice before beginning the research. *The paper must follow standard APA format (see APA manual).*

Due eight weeks after the last day of class: April 1, 2022.

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). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Augsburger, David. (1986). *Pastoral Counseling across Cultures*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Bardill, Donald R. (1997). *The Relational Systems Model for Family Therapy: Living in Four Realities*. New York: Haworth. (A Bowenian approach.)

- Bartle-Haring, S., Megan Ferriby, M., and Day, R. (2019). Couple Differentiation: Mediator or Moderator of Depressive Symptoms and Relationship Satisfaction? *JMFT*, 45, 4, 563-577.
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- Fossum, M. A., and Mason, M. J. (1986). *Facing Shame: Families in Recovery*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Freedman, Jill, and Combs, Gene. (1996). *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
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- McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., and Petry, S. (2008). *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention, Third edition*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Sons.
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- Taylor, Daniel. (1996). *The healing power of stories: creating yourself through the stories of your life*. New York: Doubleday.
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- Watson, P. J. (2011). Whose psychology? Which rationality? Christian Psychology within an ideological surround after postmodernism. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 30, 4, 307-316.
- Wimberley, Edward P. (1994). *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon.