

BRIERCREST

CO 603 Foundations of Marriage and Family Therapy Winter 2023

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Course Dates: January 23-27, 2023
On Campus modular course

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 behavior that lays the bedrock for understanding people, problems and how people change.

COURSE TEXTS

Kindle versions of these texts are acceptable

- 1) Patterson, JoEllen, Lee Williams, Todd M. Edward, Larry Chamow. & Claudia Grauf-Grounds. (2018). *Essential Skills in Family Therapy: From the First Interview to Termination, 3rd edition*. Guildford Press.
- 2) Nouwen, Henri, Donald McNeill, Douglass Morrison. (1983). *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*. Double Day.
- 3) Ricardson, Ronald. (1995). *Family Ties that Bind: A self-help guide to change through Family of Origin therapy, 3rd edition*. Self-Counsel Press.
- 4) Riemersma, Jenna. (2020). *Altogether You: Experiencing personal and spiritual transformation with Internal Family Systems therapy*. Pivotal Press.
- 5) Sherlock, Charles. (1996). *The Doctrine of Humanity*. InterVarsity Press.

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.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1) Person of the Therapist Paper, 25% (6-8 pages):

Students will read chapters 1-6 of *Family Ties that Bind* and write a thoughtful reflection which interacts with the material of the text. *This paper is not intended as a book review or summary of the text*, though material from the text should be referenced throughout the paper. Students will identify their Person of the Therapist Issues (personal issues and difficulties stemming from the counselor's family of origin that may negatively impact their personal or professional life) and the family of origin dynamics that gave rise to these issues. In light of the material in the text, you are asked to examine the issues that need further reflection and supervision to help you become, not just a qualified therapist, but a competent and skilled therapist. Questions for the student to reflect on may include, but not be limited to: What are some of the issues that you need to grapple with from your family of origin? What are some of the past/current dysfunctions and how have/will you overcome them? What were the unspoken rules in your family of origin? What happened when someone broke these rules? How were strong feelings like love and anger expressed in your family growing up? How were issues of sex, money, and power dealt with in your family of origin? How might these issues impact your practice as a therapist? How do these issues impact your current family/life as an adult? **Due on the first day of class, January 23, 2023.**

2) Genogram Paper, 15% (3-5 pages):

Students will read *The Genogram as Process* (posted on Canvas). Students will then draw a family genogram, either on paper or on their computer (a Word doc using Shapes and Draw works fine) depicting their family (grandparents, parents, partner, and children, as well as any other significant family members). Students will use the appropriate symbols for their genogram as listed in the PDF file on Canvas. Students will then write a short paper which reflects on the trends, patterns, strengths and weaknesses shown in the genogram, and answer the following questions:

- A) What family patterns or themes are most likely to be triggers?
- B) How might your family of origin experiences influence your relating to personality types you find difficult?
- C) What family messages did you receive about interacting with those who are different from you? (such as race, gender, religion, disabilities etc.)
- D) How did your family deal with difficult emotions (such as conflict, grief etc.)?

E) What were the major triangles in your family, and what steps might you take to de-triangle from any that still exist?

F) How might you want to change to be more yourself with your family?

Due on the first day of class, January 23, 2023.

3) Student Presentations, 5%:

Students will make a short presentation (10-15 min) of their findings from their Genogram paper in discussion groups to their peers.

3) Reading, 15% (3-4 pages):

Students will read chapters 1,2, & 6 of *Essential Skills in Family Therapy* as this will form the basis for class lectures and discussion. **Other chapters will be covered in subsequent courses.* Students will write a short reflection on these chapters with focus being given to how this material is supported or can be integrated with the Christian faith.

Due on the first day of class, January 23, 2023.

Mid-Course Assignments:

4) Online postings, 15% (max. 250 words per post):

At the end of each class, students will post a response in the online discussion form, reflecting on the information and activities of the day. Students will additionally post a thoughtful response to one of their cohorts' reflections. Responses are due prior to the following class.

Post-Course Assignments:

5) Integration Paper, 25% (8-10 pages):

Students will read the course texts, *Compassion, Altogether You*, and *The Doctrine of Humanity*, and write a thoughtful reflection paper using material from all three texts, as well as course lecture notes. *This paper is not intended as a book review or summary of the texts*, though material from the texts should be referenced throughout the paper. Students are free to use material from other texts but are not required to do so. This paper is intended to develop the students theological and therapeutic understanding of marriage and family therapy, and how these concepts interrelate. Students will answer questions including but not limited to: how does your Christian faith integrate with counselling? What is your view of humanity from a Christian standpoint and how might this inform your therapeutic views? What do you perceive might be areas of disagreement between your faith and your practice? What POTT issues have you identified and how do they relate to your faith and practice of counselling? **Due March 24, 2023.**

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 Academic Resource Centre Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library) or by email (ntooke@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.).