

# BRIERCREST

## CO 819: Counselling Specialty: Narrative Therapy Winter 2024

Professor: Dr. Sam Berg  
Email: sberg@briercrest.ca  
Phone: 306-552-3531  
Course Dates: January 8-12, 2024  
Course Delivery Method: On-campus, In-Person Modular  
3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course consists of three major themes. First, it will provide the students with an in-depth introduction to the practices and theoretical bases for narrative therapy. It is in-depth because it presents the philosophical and epistemological understandings that provide the basis for the practices of narrative therapy. It is introductory because it will not be a comprehensive review of all of those understandings but will provide a significant exposure to the ideas that will provide the grounds for further study in the field. Second, the course includes a significant amount of time devoted to the practices of narrative therapy, thus providing the student with experience in those practices. The third feature is the biblical and theological integration of the ideas grounding narrative therapy practice with a biblically informed and theologically astute faith. A significant theme will be the pursuit of justice in the work of biblically informed narrative therapy practice.

### COURSE INTEGRATION

The course complements the counselling programs of Briercrest Seminary by providing theory and practice in a widely practiced approach to the field of counselling and psychotherapy. The course is guided by the mission and vision of Briercrest Seminary by intentionally promoting “a community of learning that calls students to seek the kingdom of God, to be shaped profoundly by the scriptures, and to be formed spiritually and intellectually for lives of service.” It contributes to the preparation of counsellors and psychotherapists who will be both professionally competent and faithful witnesses of the gospel.

### COURSE READINGS

Berg, S. (2016). 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. Also read the Comment by Phil Monroe, pp. 55-56. <https://emcapp.ignis.de/>

Anderson, H., and Gehart, D. R. eds. (2022). *Collaborative-Dialogic Practice: Relationships and Conversations that Make a Difference Across Contexts and Cultures*. New York: Routledge. Read chapters 1-5 and chapter 15.

Cook, R., and Alexander, I., eds. (2008). *Interweavings: Conversations between narrative therapy and Christian faith*. North Charleston, SC: Create Space Books.

Madigan, S. (2019). *Narrative therapy. Second Edition*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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

Slive, A., and Bobele, M. (2011). *When one hour is all you have: Effective therapy for walk-in clients*. Zeig, Tucker & Theisen: Phoenix, AZ. Read Chapter 8: Narrative practices in a walk-in clinic by Karen Young. (**NOTE:** This book is available as a Kindle E-book that students can purchase for \$9.99 and read on the free Kindle app, but is no longer available as a hard copy book.)

White, M. (2011). *Narrative practice: Continuing the conversations*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Yarhouse, M. A., and Sells, J. N. eds. (2017). *Family therapies: A comprehensive Christian appraisal, second edition*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic. Read chapter 11: Narrative family therapy.

The Gospel according to Luke.

*International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 2023 Issue One.  
<https://dulwichcentre.com.au/2023-issue-one/>

#### **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

Berg, S. (2009). Chapter 18: The use of narrative practices and emotionally focused couple therapy with First Nations Couples. In Rastogi, M., and Thomas, V., eds. *Multicultural couple therapy*. Sage Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Denborough, D. (2001). *Family therapy: Exploring the field's past, present and possible futures*. Dulwich Centre Publications: Adelaide, Australia.

Freedman, J., and Combs, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred realities*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Madsen, W. C. (2007). *Collaborative therapy with multi-stressed families, second edition*. New York: Guilford.

Nylund, D. (2000). *Treating Huckleberry Finn: A new narrative approach to working with kids diagnosed with ADD/ADHD*. Jossey-Bass, Inc.: San Francisco, CA.

Parry, A., and Doan, R. E. (1994). *Story Revisions: Narrative therapy in a postmodern world*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Ray W. A. and Nardone, G., eds. (2009). *Paul Watzlawick: Insight may cause blindness and other essays*. Zeig, Tucker & Theissen, Inc. Phoenix, AZ.

Schauer, M., Neuner, F., and Elbert, T. (2011). *Narrative exposure therapy: A short-term treatment for traumatic stress disorders, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised and expanded edition*. Hogrefe Publishing: Cambridge, MA.

White, M. (1997). *Narratives of therapists' lives*. Dulwich Centre Publications: Adelaide, Australia.

White, M. (2007). *Maps of narrative practice*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

White, M. and Epston, C. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

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. Students will gain a working knowledge of the principles and practices of narrative therapy. They will also develop an awareness of the integration and congruence of these practices with a biblical worldview.
2. Students will develop an understanding and appreciation of the potential of narrative practices and an enthusiasm for its possibilities in the work of counselling and psychotherapy.
3. Students will gain some experience in the use of narrative practices in conversations.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

1. The congruence of narrative therapy practices with life in the Kingdom. An examination of the ways in which narrative practices fulfill our vocation as counsellors who follow Christ, and some cautions.
2. The history and philosophical underpinnings of narrative therapy. A review of the influences that come from the work in the field, and the postmodern critique of modernist practices of psychotherapy.
3. The basic practices that are included in narrative practice: Externalizing, finding unique outcomes, re-authoring, re-remembering, definitional ceremony, therapy letters, and more.
4. Experiential exercises to introduce students to the practices of narrative therapy.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

### ***Pre-Course Assignments: All are due January 8, 2024.***

1. Read the Gospel of Luke. Anchored by Jesus' "manifesto" in 4:18-19, trace the theme of justice throughout the Gospel. Write a 1-2-page paper detailing your findings in bullet form, with comments regarding your insights.  
Value: 10 points

2. Read the assigned chapters in the Anderson & Gehart text. Write a 1-page precis of your understanding of collaborative-dialogic practice as described by these authors.  
Value: 10 points
3. Read the Cook & Anderson text, *Interweavings*, the paper by Berg, and chapter 11 of Yarhouse and Sells. In two pages, write your overall impressions and conclusions about the integration of narrative practices and a biblical worldview.  
Value: 10 points
4. Read the texts on narrative practices by Madigan, Morgan, White, and the assigned chapters in Slive & Bobele, and Yarhouse & Sells. Write a 2-3 page paper discussing your learnings about the practices of narrative therapy as these authors describe it.  
Value: 15 points
5. Review the *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, 2023 Issue One, available at <https://dulwichcentre.com.au/>. Scan the articles in this issue and write a brief paragraph reviewing one of the articles in this issue. You may have to buy a one-year membership in order to access it. You are encouraged to do this.  
Value: 5 points

***Mid-Course Assignments (due Friday, January 19, 2024):***

1. Write a paper reflecting on your in-class practice and participation. Reflect on what you appreciated about this introduction to narrative practices. Include desires and goals for further practice of these ideas, as well as questions and any reservations you might have about this way of working with people.  
Length: 3-5 pages  
Value: 20 points

***Post-Course Assignments (due March 8, 2024):***

1. Write a paper describing Narrative Therapy under the following sections:
  - a. its history
  - b. the philosophical influences that led to it, and the principles that guide its practices in the work of counselling
  - c. a brief description of each of the practices. Use the “maps” in White’s book as a guide for this section.
  - d. a concluding paragraph on your understanding of its congruence with kingdom work  
Length: 10 pages  
Value: 30 points

## **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*

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) without instructor authorization in the preparation and/or submission of their assignments violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately. Students are responsible to ensure they are using their sources with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#). In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email ([arc@briercrest.ca](mailto:arc@briercrest.ca)). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).