



CO 712 Interpersonal Trauma Counselling Winter 2025

Professor: Tony F. Schnare, M.A., R.M.F.T.-S., C.P.C.S., C.C.S.

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Course Dates: February 17th – 21st, 2025

Course Delivery Method: In-Person Modular

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the familial and cultural narratives that shape the context in which abusive relationships and trauma are experienced. Contemporary issues like family violence, sexual trauma, spiritual abuse, and professional misconduct involving sexual abuse will set the backdrop for the class discourse. Clinical interventions considered will reflect systemic perspectives and trauma-informed therapy.

Prerequisite: CO 603 Foundations of Marriage and Family Therapy or permission of the professor.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course will provide an introduction to understanding the trauma experienced when relational vulnerability is exploited, trust violated, and power misused. Practically these dynamics form the foundation of many therapeutic conversations.

COURSE TEXTS

Gingrich, H. (2020) *Restoring the Shattered self: A Christian Counsellor's Guide to Complex Trauma*. IVP Academic.

MacIntosh, H. (2019). *Developmental Couple Therapy for Complex Trauma: A Manual for Therapists*. Routledge.

Van der Kolk, B. (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Books.

One of:

Margaret, L. (2018) *Scars, Bared: A Raw Look Inside Abusive Relationships*. Independently Published.

Or

Penfold, R. (2005) *Dragonslippers: This is What an Abusive Relationship Looks Like*. Penguin Books.

(NB. Students should be aware that this text is graphic in its presentation – Preferred, but limited availability).

Or

Tucker, R. (2016) *Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife: My Story of Finding Hope after Domestic Abuse*. Zondervan Publishers.

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>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Cognitive

1. The participant will gain an understanding of the counselling issues encountered in contemporary society.
2. The participant will become aware of the relational dynamics that make up the context in which trauma and traumatic relationships occur.
3. The participant will develop an understanding of how trauma affects individuals, families, and the counsellor who works with them.
4. The participant will be able to integrate a variety of trauma-informed counselling methodologies, including a Biblical framework.
5. The participant will gain knowledge of the ethical and legal issues in working with families and individuals who are or have been in relationships involving trauma.
6. The participant will learn to differentiate between those counselling situations that he/she is able to deal with and those needing referral.

Affective

1. The participant will grow emotionally and spiritually as he/she examines his/her own beliefs and relational dynamics that have the potential to reinforce and contribute to relationships in which trauma may result.
2. The participant will become aware of his/her own emotional responses in relation to the various counselling issues and how these have the potential for helping and/or inhibiting their effectiveness as a counsellor.
3. The participant will cultivate the openness and sensitivity necessary to "empathetically" engage clients in a counselling process.
4. The participant will develop a passion for challenging discourses that reinforce and contribute to the dynamics within traumatic relationships.

Skills

1. The participant will develop understanding and competency in assisting individuals impacted by a number of difficult counselling issues.
2. The participant will acquire the ability to identify and assess the dynamics of traumatic relationships.
3. The participant will be able to competently engage in discourses that foster healthy relationships.

4. The participant will acquire the ability to evaluate his/her own relational styles so as to cultivate mutually respectful and healthy relationships.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

1. Vicarious Traumatization
2. Conceptualizing Trauma
 - Interpersonal and IFS Theories
 - Attachment Theory
 - Polyvagal and Somatic Theories
 - Biblical Framework
3. Contextualizing Trauma
 - Relational & Systemic dynamics: macro, meso, and micro
4. Considering the Impact of Trauma
 - Biological-Physiological, Psychological, Relational and Spiritual
 - PTSD, C-PTSD
5. Case Specifics
 - Domestic Violence
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Professional Misconduct involving Sexual Abuse
6. Deconstructing the macro, meso, and micro factors that reinforce abuse under the guise of spirituality
7. Trauma-informed, compassionate responses: Biblical, Ethical, Legal, and Clinical

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

- 1) Reflectively read the text, *Scars, Bared; Dragonslippers;* or *Black and White Bible, Black and Blue Wife*. As you do so keep an ongoing journal (handwritten is fine) of your thoughts, reactions, and experiences. Include in your journal parallels with your own journey or insights gained as you encounter the story of another. Reflective engagement with the content, not length is the goal here. Upon completion of the reading and journaling, write (type) a 4-page executive summary of your reflections. Submit your journal, along with your executive summary at the beginning of the first day of class, Monday, February 17, 2025.

Value: 25%

Mid-Course Assignments:

- 1) Participation – Learning outcomes are directly related to a student’s active participation during class discussions and exercises. Accordingly, there will be an expectation of participant contribution to the exchange of information and to the learning experience.
- 2) Students will be assigned to a triad during the week. These triads will utilize breakout rooms for debriefing and discussions on a variety of topics. **A highlight for many students is the structured, end of the day debriefings that occur in your triads. Please anticipate up to 1 hour as you plan your schedule for the week.**

Value: 15%

Post-Course Assignments:

- 1) Develop an integrative treatment approach that will guide your work with those whose lives have been impacted by interpersonal trauma. Your paper will include an introductory section outlining your understating of trauma, its impact, and the ways it shapes and informs relational patterns. Include also a section identifying key areas of treatment and healing-focus and how as a Christian therapist you will approach these key areas. Conclude your paper with an application of your approach to a specific interpersonal trauma.

Include at least 10 references that are articles from peer-reviewed counselling, marriage and family, or psychology journals. In your paper you will want to draw from the course texts and incorporate content from the class discussions. Your paper should be 12-15 pages in length, excluding the cover and reference pages. For marking purposes, there is a limit of 10% overage on your paper. Be succinct. Please note the policy below under ***Academic Honesty*** regarding the use of generative AI.

The assignment is due eight weeks after the last day of class: Friday, April 18, 2025.

Value: 60%

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 without instructor authorization 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.

Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and

the Briercrest Format Guide. 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). 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 modification or extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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WEB RESOURCES

<https://www.nicabm.com/>

<https://www.hopeaftertrauma.ca/>