



CO 717 Group Counselling Strategies Winter 2025

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Course Dates: June 9-13, 2025
Course Delivery Method: In-Person Modular

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a look at group-focused counselling ministries from a number of perspectives. It incorporates a “reflecting team” approach to working within groups. The principles studied in this course are applicable to establishing support groups, therapy groups, or simply leading a better Bible study.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course is intended to provide practical, ethical, and professional skills related to competency in group involvement and leadership. These skills can be employed for working with groups in both professional and ministry contexts.

COURSE TEXTS

Schneider Corey, M. S., Corey, G. & Corey, C. (2018). *Groups: Process and practice (10th Ed.)* Cengage Learning.

Scott, S. (2004/2017). *Fierce conversations: Achieving success at work and in life, one conversation at a time.* New American Library.

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

1. Become conversant in the skills and personal characteristics that enhance group leading effectiveness and leadership.
2. Experience and analyze a small group setting according to principles set out in the course materials and classes.
3. Practice and evaluate personal group leadership skills as presented in the course.
4. Apply the principles and skills learned through the class to a type of group that the student is involved in, or expects to be involved in at a professional level.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

- Day 1: Creating Safety in Group Settings
- Day 2: Group Stages and Dynamics
- Day 3: Group Leadership and Skills
- Day 4: Managing Difficult Group Dynamics
- Day 5: Creating Conversation

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Read Corey, Corey, & Corey. Before or after reading the text, attend a series of five groups. You can attend as a facilitator, co-facilitator, member or visitor. You can use a group that you are already a part of if you see it as a viable learning option for you. As you read through Corey, Corey, and Corey's texts, you will find suggested exercises in each chapter to help you process the information. Complete each exercise listed below plus one more exercise of your choice taken from the text. It is preferable that you choose an exercise that causes you to consider principles that are new to you or that challenge you to new levels of trust, understanding, or skill. Following are exercises required for this assignment. Be sure to do these five exercises plus one more of your choice:
 - a. Chapter 4, p. 147: Exercises; Question for Discussion
 - b. Chapter 2, pp. 45 – 46: Learning in Action – Self-Assessment of Group Leadership Skills
 - c. Chapter 6, pp. 188- 189: Learning in Action
 - d. Chapter 7, p. 235: Journal Prompts
 - e. Chapter 7, pp. 269 – 270: Exercise – Self-Assessment Scale for Group Members

Write a summary of the skills or practices that challenged you the most, why they were challenging, and any new skills you will develop as a result of what you read. You can comment on anything from the reading that you choose, but be sure to give particular attention to the concepts considered in the required exercises.

Due Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 Length: 5-6 pp. Assignment weighting: 25%

2. In preparation for observing and analyzing your involvement in class conversations and exercises, read Susan Scott's text. Hand in a document confirming your completion of the reading. As a part of this assignment, outline any personal challenges that you would expect to encounter or experience in a class where you will be asked to engage in an honest and authentic way. State what would make these challenging, what you can do to overcome these challenges, and important strategies that will help with this.

Due Date: Monday, June 9, 2025 Length: 3-4 pp. Assignment weighting: 15%

Mid-Course Assignments:

1. Take a one-hour segment to engage the class in a discussion relevant to the topic of group leading. Topics will be chosen in collaboration with the instructor. Afterward, the group will debrief regarding the skills observed in the leader to help them identify strengths and areas to strengthen. Groups will use the Self-Assessment for Group Leadership Skills (see pre-course assignment #1 above) for guidance to help provide feedback to the leader. To be

most beneficial, students are asked to provide specific encouragement as well as specific things that they can do to improve their group counselling/leadership skills. This will help them to see if they have any blind spots or areas of clear agreement. Write a four to five page summary reviewing what was learned through this exercise. Comment on blind spots, surprises, notes of encouragement, confirmation of gifting or calling. This assignment will then be used for developing a plan for continued growth beyond, and as a result of this class.

Due Date: Friday, June 20, 2025 Length: 3-4 pp. Assignment weighting: 15%

Post-Course Assignments:

1. Final paper:

- a. Part I: Choose a type of group that you see yourself working with professionally. Conduct a literature survey of current research (within the last 10 years) providing insight and direction for working with this kind of group. You should use at least 10 peer reviewed articles that contribute to your understanding to leading your chosen group type. Write up a plan saying how you would create, start, conduct, and terminate the group. Be sure to integrate and apply principles from the texts, class discussions, and what you gleaned in your literature survey.

Due Date: Friday, July 25, 2025 Length: 8 - 10 pp. Assignment weighting: 25%

- b. Part II: Based on what you learned about yourself as a group leader and anything that you observed in other group leaders that you wish to incorporate, develop a practical plan to explain how you will build or refine your skills so that you can be a better group leader. Explain what makes your choice of skill development important within your chosen group type and how developing this skill will enhance your leadership as well as the function of the group that you lead. This assignment should take the things commented on in the mid-class assignment and build on that in a way that incorporates the class discussions and information, all readings, your literature survey, group feedback, and further thought around planning and personal growth and skill building.

Due Date: Friday, July 25, 2025 Length: 5-6 pp. Assignment weighting: 20%

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.

Modular 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 extension requests).