



CO 714 Counselling Systems and Approaches Winter 2025

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Course Dates: January 15 – April 16, 2025

Course Delivery Method: Online

Asynchronous learning on Canvas and/or small group work: weekly x 2 hours

Synchronous Zoom classes: Section A: Wednesdays 3:15-4:15pm (SK time)

Section B: Wednesdays 4:45-5:45pm (SK time)

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This survey course looks at a variety of current approaches to counselling and psychotherapy. It includes an extensive survey of systemic approaches, including the influence of postmodern ideas on this work. This course is intended to provide a broad background in systemic approaches for students of counselling and for others interested in the theological, philosophical, and technical bases of systems theory.

COURSE INTEGRATION

There are over 400 different approaches and techniques dedicated to helping people change through counselling. This survey course will look at a variety of the major current approaches to counselling and psychotherapy.

COURSE TEXTS

Bailey, Russell J., and Ogles, Benjamin M. (2023). *Common Factors Therapy: A Principle Based Treatment Framework*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Mental Health Commission of Canada. www.mentalhealthcommission.ca.

McMinn, Mark, R., and Campbell, Clark D. (2017). *Integrative Psychotherapy: Toward a Comprehensive Christian Approach*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Norcross, John C., Prochaska, Judith J., and Prochaska, James O. (2024). *Systems of Psychotherapy: A Transtheoretical Analysis*. New York, NY: Oxford University 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>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

COURSE OUTCOMES

- a. Historical knowledge around basic types of approaches to help people change.
- b. Practice in the discipline of thinking systemically about people, their problems, and solutions.
- c. An evaluative understanding of these various approaches, especially in the comparison between individualistic and family systems approaches to appreciate the complexity of systemic approaches.
- d. Appreciation for the creativity used to develop the various systems and approaches.
- e. Curiosity about the larger field of psychotherapy.
- f. Broad understanding of various theoretical orientations and theories of change to help the student choose a framework within an established psychotherapeutic theory.

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Outline	Required Readings
January 15	Introduction	Prochaska Ch. 1, McMinn & Campbell Ch. 1 & 2
January 22	Common Factors & Existential/Experiential Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 4 & 6, Bailey & Ogles Ch 1
January 29	Common Factor 1 & Exposure Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 8, Bailey & Ogles Ch 2
February 5	Common Factor 2 & Third-wave Therapies	Prochaska Ch.11, Bailey & Ogles Ch 3
February 12	Common Factor 3 & Systemic Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 12, Bailey & Ogles Ch 4
February 19	Reading Break - No Class	
February 26	Common Factor 4 & Gender-Informed/ Multicultural Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 13 &14, Bailey & Ogles Ch 5
March 5	Common Factor 5 & Integrative Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 16, McMinn & Campbell Ch. 4 & 5, Bailey & Ogles Ch 6

March 12	Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 2 & 3, McMinn & Campbell Ch. 3
March 19	Cognitive/Behavior Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 9 & 10, McMinn & Campbell Ch. 6 & 7
March 26	No class	
April 2	Positive Psychology & Solution-focused Therapies	Prochaska Ch.15 McMinn & Campbell Ch. 8-9
April 9	Person-centered & Interpersonal Therapies	Prochaska Ch. 5 & 7, McMinn & Campbell Ch. 10 & 11
April 16	Choosing a Model	Prochaska Ch. 17-18, McMinn & Campbell Ch. 12

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Study the website of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (www.mentalhealthcommission.ca) and write a 2–3-page review of the issues it tackles, policies it promotes, and the resources that it offers.

Due: January 13, 2025

Value: 10%

Mid/Post Course Assignments:

2. Commonplace Book

Commonplace Book - A commonplace book is a compilation of knowledge, ideas, quotations, and observations collected by an individual. It serves as a notebook to gather and organize information from various sources for future reference and reflection. All students will maintain a commonplace book throughout the course, which should include essential/interesting quotes from the assigned materials, reflections on the course, personal reflections upon self-discovery, etc.

Selection Criteria: Each week, you will make an entry in your commonplace book that should address at least one of the following areas. The entry can be up to 500 words. Students will submit their commonplace book for review on March 5th; all entries are due for grading on April 16th.

Each entry should include an explanation (50-100 words) about how it meets one of the following in your own words:

1. An illustration of the author's central argument or main point.
2. A passage that confused or inspired you in some way.
3. A connection to other readings or class discussions.
4. A challenge to how you have previously thought about the topic.

Due: March 5 & April 16, 2025

Value: 25%

3. Discussion Posts

In this course, you will have the opportunity to post two questions on the discussion board based on the week's readings. Each question you post will be worth 5% of your grade. Additionally, you are required to engage with one of the other questions posted each week. Your engagement in the comments on your discussion question and other students' questions will account for 10% of your grade. You must comment on at least one question per week and thoughtfully engage with the posted questions. On the weeks that you post a question, please follow the thread and respond to at least 2 of the answers or comments.

Due: April 16, 2025

Value: 15%

4. Common Factors Paper

Write a 3–4-page paper that delves into the common factors that contribute to effective counseling and psychotherapy. Your paper should cite "Common Factors Therapy: A Principle-Based Treatment Framework" and incorporate insights from other relevant readings and research.

Your paper should cover the following points:

1. Identify and discuss the common factors across different therapeutic approaches that lead to positive client outcomes.
2. Examine the specific aspects of a client's thoughts, emotions, behaviors, or life circumstances that are typically altered through counseling.
3. Describe the overall goals and expected outcomes of successful counseling and psychotherapy.
4. Answer the question: What does positive change look like for clients?
5. If applicable, reflect on your own understanding and experiences related to these topics.

Your paper should be well-structured and thoughtful and demonstrate a clear understanding of the common factors approach to counseling and psychotherapy.

Due: March 26, 2025

Value: 20%

5. Counselling Modalities Paper

Please write a 6–8-page paper analyzing the strengths and limitations of five counseling modalities to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the field, critical analysis skills, and the ability to synthesize complex information. For each approach, please include:

1. A description of the unique aspects of the approach.
2. An explanation of the specific techniques utilized in the approach.
3. How the approach views people, their problems, and solutions.
4. How the approach defines satisfactory change.
5. Discussion of how or if this modality connects to a communal understanding of Christian life.

Please incorporate course materials and at least four other relevant research pieces.

Due: April 16, 2025

Value: 30%

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 honor. 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 profound 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).

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