



CO 615 Working with Diverse Populations in Counselling Spring 2026

Professor: Sari Faith
Email: sfaith@briercrest.ca
Course Dates: April 27-May 1, 2026
Course Delivery Method: Online modular course

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on developing an appreciation for human diversity, including culture, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and the ability to attune to client socio-cultural contexts. It will also raise awareness of oppression, power, injustice and how this impacts the therapeutic process and how to adapt it to be more relevant for diverse populations.

Prerequisite: CO 603 Foundations of Systemic Therapy

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course primarily seeks to fulfill the Master of Clinical Counselling (MACC) /Master of Arts in Couple and Family Therapy (MACFT) Program Outcome (PO) #4 by raising awareness of human diversity and how to take a reflective stance in clinical work with client. This course also fulfills PO #1 by bringing of contextual and systemic factors that influence clients. It also fulfills PO# 2 by increasing awareness of power dynamics in therapeutic relationships and how to prioritize collaboration. This course addresses PO#3 in enhancing ethical practice with diverse populations. This course also seeks to fulfill MACC/MACFT Seminary-wide Outcome (SO)# 2 and 3 by helping students serve God's kingdom in its diversity in a professional manner.

COURSE TEXTS

Fisher, L. (2021). *Diversity in Clinical Practice: A practical shame free guide to reducing cultural offenses & repairing cross-cultural relationships*. PESI Publishing.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (with Fontaine, P.). (2016). *A Knock On The Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools*. University of Manitoba Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Hook, J. N. (2014). Engaging Client with Cultural Humility. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 33(3), 277-280. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A385805845/EAIM?u=briercrest&sid=bookmark-EAIM&xid=2ca7660f>

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's APA Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/documents>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES (SO)

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES (PO) MACC AND MACFT

Students and graduates will:

1. Demonstrate a systemic and strength-focused perspective on people and their problems.
2. Demonstrate competence in a client-centred, collaborative therapeutic approach.
3. Demonstrate ethical clinical practice.
4. Take a reflective stance in their clinical work.

Additional PO MACFT ONLY

5. Demonstrate skills in working with couples and families to improve their relationship quality.

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. Students will develop a nuanced understanding of their social location and how intersections of power and privilege impact the person of the therapist and clients.
2. Students will internalize the ability to attune to socio-cultural contexts and work with diverse family and cultural systems.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of Indigenous history in Canada with a focus on the family through a systemic lens, understand the effects of colonization, current issues in Canadian culture affecting Indigenous peoples, Calls to Action by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, and the influence of these aspects on our engagement with Indigenous clients.
4. Students will investigate oppression, power and social injustice and how it affects clients and the therapeutic process, including barriers to access to services and bias within the counselling field.
5. Students will build adaptability in their therapeutic approach when working with culturally diverse clients and identify culturally relevant resources.
6. Students will form a theology of justice and come to a greater appreciation of the therapist's role of advocacy.

7. Students will understand the collaborative role in assisting clients to engage in self-advocacy and in seeking third-party support.
8. Students will internalize a broad appreciation of human diversity, as informed by a theology of being created in God's image.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

1. Developing Cultural Competence
2. Perspectives on Multicultural Diversity
3. Practical Strategies for Cultural Competence
4. Addressing Microaggressions
5. Common Cultural Experiences and Misunderstandings

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas. For all assignments, please use APA formatting. Please note: The use of AI, such as Grammarly, can only be used for final editing of the assignments. AI cannot be used to create the case study or to write the Truth and Reconciliation paper, and it cannot be used for any outline or content creation for any of the assignments. Acknowledgement of any AI use must be included in the assignment as per the Academic Honesty policy.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. **Reflection Paper (SO#2, PO#4) due April 27, 2026**

With the concept of we are all "image bearers" in mind, please write a brief 2-3 page reflection on when someone learns of your own cultural groups/mosaic and it differs from their own, how do you want to be perceived? What do you hope if conveyed to that person, what values and positive impressions do you hope stand out? This section should be 1-1.5 pages in length. Now think of a time you were interacting with someone that was different than you and you felt it didn't go well. Looking back, what would you have done differently? What elements of difference made you uncomfortable? What strengths/assets would this person bring to a group setting do you think? What are some things you could do next time to help that person feel more loved? This section should be 1-1.5 pages in length.

Value: 20%

Post-Course Assignments:

1. **Case Study (SO#3, PO#1, PO#2, PO#3, PO#4) due June 26, 2026**

Choose a group mentioned in Part VI: Common Cultural Experiences and Misunderstandings in the *Diversity in Clinical Practice* (Fisher, L. 2021) text.

- a. Write a 7-9 page case study of a hypothetical client who belongs to this group. Create for them a systemic focused background including commonly addressed demographic information, a genogram and family history. Please chose a group that differs from the one/ones you identify with, ideally one that you feel you would benefit from more understanding of. You are welcome to use a public figure or a person known to you as inspiration; however, be sure to change all client identifying information for the paper.
- b. Explain why you chose this particular group. What areas did you feel like you lacked understanding or would benefit from more growth? How does the client's worldview differ from your own? What ways would you try to grow your relationship with this client? What areas of society could this client benefit from advocacy in a therapeutic

relationship (for example, pain management is often under addressed in Black women's health; as a counsellor I can help my client by addressing this in session, validating the grief and frustration that this rightfully brings and perhaps might reach out to their medical provider letting them know we have been working on chronic pain issues together and my client might benefit from better pain management)?

- c. Please find a cultural competency training opportunity that is available to you that focuses on this chosen cultural group. Include in your paper what you would choose and why you chose it.
- d. Finally, write a concluding paragraph or two on how you might take the principles of developing cultural competence, developing multicultural diversity, and common cultural experiences and misunderstanding learned in this case study and apply it to clients or peers of differing groups in your future? For example, having learned that within countries there are regional dialects and differing customs I may ask a client more about their cultural identity beyond their national group.

Please use a minimum of 6 peer reviewed academic sources. Research articles on how the client's culture affects their approach to mental health care/counselling. This can include both systemic and individual research citations. Address how this information can be applied to your work with the client.

Value 40%

2. Truth and Reconciliation Reflection paper (SO#3, PO#4) due June 26, 2026

In 6-8 pages and using essay format, respond to the CACFT reflection questions found here:

(<https://camft.ca/TRC-Reflection-Thoughts>)

Value: 40%

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](#).

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

Modular 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).