

PSYC5202 COUNSELING IN MINISTRY
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Disclaimer: This syllabus is intended to give the student a general idea of the content, format, and textbooks used for this class. The professor will submit a full syllabus at the beginning of the class which will contain a course schedule and the instructor's information.

Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Values

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary highlights five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. While all five core values are emphasized, one of the core values will be identified as a primary focus each semester. Students will be encouraged to consider how counseling can be applied to the core values within the context of pastoral ministry and counseling. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of Christian counseling and basic counseling skills. Biblically-based foundations and approaches to counseling will be examined. In addition, the class will address skill development and application and will examine counseling issues such as marital and family relationship problems, depression, anxiety, anger, forgiveness and reconciliation, abuse problems, and spiritual direction.

Objectives

In order to perform counseling effectively with the knowledge and skills necessary, students, by the end of the course, should:

1. Know the basic foundations and dimensions of biblically-based Christian counseling, including theological, pastoral, historical, scientific, and psychological elements and counseling models.
2. Be able to evaluate personal limits in counseling and to know how and when to make appropriate referrals.
3. Be able to demonstrate effective basic counseling skills.
4. Be able to apply a biblically-based knowledge of pastoral care and counseling to the difficulties commonly faced by church members and their families.

Teaching Methods

As this course is being taught on the Internet, its primary learning activity is interaction with required readings and material posted to the course's website. Each week you will be asked to interact with different types of materials, including lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, class texts, exercises or practical activities, and responses from other students. Students will participate in a weekly threaded discussion on Blackboard.

Required Textbooks

- Bible—your preferred translation
- Jones, Ian F. (2006). *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.
- Sphar, Asa R. III, and Argile Smith (2003). *Helping Hurting People: A Handbook on Reconciliation-Focused Counseling and Preaching*. University Press of America, Inc.
- Collins, Gary. (2007). *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*. Revised and Updated Third Edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Recommended Reading

(Although these books are not required, they provide helpful information for further study in areas covered by the course.)

- Bolton, Robert (1979) *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts*. New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster.
- Clinton, Timothy, & George Ohlschlager (Eds.). (2002). *Competent Christian Counseling, Volume One: Foundations & Practice of Compassionate Soul Care*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: WaterBrook Press.
- Clinton, Tim, Archibald Hart, & George Ohlschlager. Editors (2006). *Caring for People God's Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic.
- Johnson, Eric, Editor (2010). *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Sande, Ken (2004). *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. Third Edition, Revised and Updated. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.

Course Requirements

Examinations:

(Midterm—20%, Final—20%)

Exams will cover material from assigned readings and PowerPoint presentations. They will be posted on Blackboard, along with instructions.

Discussion Board:

20%

Students will be required to participate in weekly discussion on Blackboard. Questions and activities will be posted throughout the semester. Each student will be responsible for (1) one

primary post in response to the posted assignment, and (2) a minimum of two responses to primary posts from other students.

Posts will be graded for content quality and synthesis of course reading materials. Major or primary posts must demonstrate an understanding of the reading, presentation, or assigned activity, with a normal expectation of approximately one paragraph in length. Responses to the posts of others may be shorter, but demonstrate evidence of quality and informed reflection on the subject.

A new discussion board will be posted at the beginning of each section within a unit (usually on a Sunday of each week). Students must post a response to each assignment initiated by the instructor sometime during the week. In order to facilitate better discussion, students are encouraged to post their primary responses as early as possible in the week. Discussion boards will be closed on Saturday at 11:59 PM (CST) each week. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, discussion boards will not be reopened once they are closed.

Book Review: **15%**

Students will write a book review of not less than five pages, excluding cover sheet, of the book *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth* by Ian F. Jones. The review will be double spaced, in accordance with current APA style for counseling students or Turabian style for all other students. The book review should include a brief summary of content and an evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the work and its applicability to Christian ministry and counseling. Submit the review on Blackboard at the designated place under Assignments.

Research Paper: **25%**

Each student will write a paper on a counseling issue (see possible topics below), approximately 12-15 pages in length (not counting cover sheet, endnotes or bibliography).

The paper should consist of:

1. An introduction to the topic, including definitions, description and extent of the problem, and significant related issues.
2. How the Scripture speaks to the issue and information gathered from research in the field (particularly evidence-based research).
3. An awareness of biblical insights along with possible counseling interventions and resources.

Possible sources for information include Bible commentaries, books on the subject, counseling texts, journals, and organizations dedicated to addressing the problem—one place to start your search is the syllabus bibliography. Caution: although you may gather information from multiple sources, you need to be careful about the use of material found on the Internet, much of which is of dubious quality. Check your sources carefully. Submit the review on Blackboard at the designated place under Assignments.

Possible Research Topics: The following topics are generally broad. You may need to narrow the topic in order to cover the material within the requirements of the paper.

1. The Use of Scripture in Counseling
2. Marriage Counseling for _____ (You select the issue) _____.

3. Bereavement, Grief and Loss Counseling
4. Problem-Solving and Resolving Conflict in Relationships
5. Ethical Issues for Christian Counselors
6. The Essentials of Pre-Marital Counseling
7. Counseling Parents of Troubled Teens
8. Counseling Parents of Troubled Children
9. Counseling with Single Parents
10. Counseling with Singles
11. Counseling People with Terminal Illnesses
12. Counseling Divorced Church Members
13. Counseling Substance Abusers
14. Counseling Children of Alcoholic Parents
15. Counseling Skills for a Successful Pastoral Counselor
16. Group Counseling in a Church Setting
17. Counseling People in Financial Crisis
18. Communication Skills in Relationships and Counseling
19. Anxiety & Depression Counseling
20. Trauma and Stress Counseling
21. Self-Harm and Suicide Counseling
22. Counseling and Spiritual Crises
23. Counseling and Spiritual Warfare
24. Counseling Victims of Incest/Rape or other Sexual Abuse
25. Counseling: Brief vs. Long-Term Therapy
26. Other topics as approved by the professor.

The paper will be in the APA format for counseling majors and Turabian for all other majors. The paper will include a bibliography with a minimum of ten references other than the texts for this course. Papers will be scanned for plagiarism. (See the seminary statement in the Student Handbook under General Policies [p. 9] at <http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/StudentHandbook.pdf>)

Course Evaluation

Requirements and Grading:

1. Exam 1 (Midterm)	20%
2. Exam 2 (Final)	20%
3. Discussion Board	20%
4. Book Review	15%
5. Research Paper	25%

Due Dates and Times:

All assignments are due on their respective due dates as detailed in the Reading and Assignments Schedule. Assignments are to be submitted on Blackboard by “end of day” (11:59 PM) on the dates they are due. Late assignments will be assessed a 4-point per day penalty.

If technical difficulty precludes your submitting an assignment through Blackboard, you may email it as an attachment to the instructor and it will be graded according to the date & time stamp on your email. Please use the email option only as a last resort.

Additional Items and Policies

Attendance:

This course is designed to be an interaction between the professor and students and between students. Attendance for this course will be determined by the students' responses to questions posted to the discussion board each week. Each student must make substantive responses to the activities and question(s) posted. You are encouraged to interact with the responses of your fellow students as well. **Your participation will be determined by your interaction with other students' comments on the Discussion Board.** Failure to make the required posting will result in the student being counted absent for the week. Students who are counted absent will be penalized according to the policy of the seminary. Pay attention to the due dates for postings. Time is set at U.S. Central Standard Time (CST).

Grading Scale:

The following grading scale is used at NOBTS (see the Graduate Catalog, available online at <http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/GraduateCatalog.pdf>):

- A: 93-100
- B: 85-92
- C: 77-84
- D: 70-76
- F: Below 70

Online Etiquette:

As a student preparing for ministry and enrolled in a graduate level course, a mature attitude toward education is expected. Material posted to this course's website should reflect scholarly thought appropriate to both ministry and graduate level work. Please do not post non-course material to the website. Observing the following suggestions will help ensure a positive experience for everyone.

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online on the Discussion Board. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity will be expected at all times in the online environment.

Here are some helpful hints as to what to do:

1. Use courtesy and discretion.
2. Be precise in your writing and keep in mind that your audience does not have the benefit of seeing you or observing your body language, including your facial expressions, and, in particular, hearing your "tone of voice." What you may intend as humor could be interpreted in a variety of ways by your readers, so try to communicate as accurately as possible.

3. Feel free to disagree with one another, including your instructor, but do so in an agreeable manner. Treat one another with Christian respect.
4. Respond to each Discussion Board assignment to the best of your ability, keeping in mind that your responses, for better or for worse, may influence others.
5. Appropriate humor and levity are a valued part of group discussions.

Some helpful hints on what you should avoid:

1. Don't use all capital letters. SUCH PRACTICE IS THE EQUIVALENT OF SHOUTING AND IS CONSIDERED RUDE. Occasional use of a word in all capitals for emphasis is fine: "Do NOT ridicule a fellow student (or the instructor)!"
2. Don't be overwhelmed or intimidated by a difficult topic, particularly one that you have not studied before. Each person brings different levels of knowledge and understanding to the discussion and we should all be able to learn from one another. Your theological training may be limited, and you may even be a relatively new Christian, but you are a child of God and you have the Holy Spirit in you. Study hard and be confident in what you add to the discussion group.
3. Don't set limits on your reading and study and remain ignorant about a subject you know little about. Be prepared to do some extra reading, when necessary, rather than trying to get by. The goal of your Christian education should not be mediocrity but doing your best in order to honor God. (Something to think about: Secular education asks "What do I need to do to get an A or a passing grade?" Christian education rejects this form of idolatry and asks "What do I need to do to honor and glorify God?" The grade, while important, is a secondary consideration or objective.)
4. Don't talk down to others, use pejorative language that diminishes others, shut down a discussion by pulling rank ("I'm an expert on this subject...") use sarcasm, be mean-spirited, or imply that you have a corner on biblical truth and interpretation. We need to be humble in our communication and reminded that God can even use donkeys to communicate his truth if he so chooses (Num. 22).
5. Don't use ad-hominem arguments, where you dismiss a position, theory, opinion, or an idea by attacking the person presenting the view.

Some acceptable discussion and contributions include:

1. Dealing with the issue rather than getting off track or getting bogged down in incidental or minor points.
2. Citing something you learned in a specific course, or referencing something (appropriate) that you have read.
3. Using anecdotes or personal illustrations that add to the discussion.

Help make our class discussions some of the most fruitful and enjoyable experiences of this course.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is considered by NOBTS to be a serious academic and ethical offense. It also has implications in the student's adherence to copyright. Read the NOBTS *Student Handbook* (p. 9) (See: <http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/StudentHandbook.pdf>) for a description of plagiarism and how to avoid it. The seminary has instituted serious disciplinary consequences for

plagiarism. See your style guides (APA or Turabian) for correct format for citation in your assignments.

Emergencies:

In cases of emergency, such as hurricanes, disease outbreaks, or other disasters, go to the seminary website (www.nobts.edu) for information. The seminary administration will post information, such as the nature of the emergency, instructions for response, and evacuation and return dates. Please check Blackboard for information specific to this course. Because Blackboard is available, the course will continue even if the main campus is closed. Please consider registering for the seminary's priority text messaging service through SelfServe. This service is used only in emergencies, and will allow the seminary to deliver urgent information to you as needed.

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National Association of Nouthetic Counselors: <https://www.nanc.org/>