

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

IS 780/MF 780 Senior Seminar/Research in Family Studies Spring, 2008 3 units

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I. DESCRIPTION

The Senior Seminar / Research in Family Studies courses are designed to afford the advanced student the opportunity to integrate key themes of learning around a topic of interest. The main project of the course is to write and present one senior paper. Additional assignments include attendance at other presentations, reading seminar papers written by fellow students, and critiquing papers written by fellow students. *The size of the senior seminar paper requires careful planning and consultation with the instructors, who will also serve as chair for presentation sessions.*

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To demonstrate an advanced ability to integrate biblical/theological insights with praxis in the church and/or therapy settings.
2. To exegete biblical texts within a design that includes the descriptive, synthetic, hermeneutical, and pragmatic analytical tasks.
3. To interpret diverse cultural contexts of ministry using theological perspectives integrated with social scientific approaches.
4. To explore and present theological or family issues, concerns and approaches that will enhance skills and understanding of family therapy or pastoral practice.
5. To develop relationship with a cohort of fellow learners and contribute to the MBBS community by leaving the project on permanent file in the Hiebert Library.

III. MBBS PROGRAM GOALS AND DEGREE OUTCOMES:

This course contributes to the larger goals of the Seminary program by helping the student:

1. To write a paper which utilizes the academic disciplines of Biblical studies, counseling or theological/pastoral principles and demonstrates the integration of theology and ones chosen field of study.
2. To become more familiar with the systemic approach to counseling resources and research within the larger systems of community, church, and culture.
3. To analyze, synthesize and engage contemporary church and world issues from a biblical theological perspective.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS:

Core, D. (2000). The Seminary Student Writes. Chalice Press.

American Psychological Association (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed. APA. (FOR MFT STUDENTS)

V. RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Glicken, M.D. (2007). A Guide to Writing for Human Service Professionals. Rowman & Littlefield College Publishing.

VI. COURSE FORMAT

IS 780/ MF 780 is scheduled to meet Wednesdays from 1:30-4:30 PM. Depending on the number of presentations scheduled and taking into account the various schedules of students, class may be extended until 5 p.m., however we will not meet formally every week, especially in the first part of the semester. Faculty will be available for consultation during the scheduled class period and students are encouraged to take advantage of this resource. A final schedule of seminar sessions will be distributed during the first two weeks of the semester. Class WILL MEET on January 30, February 6 and 13. Student presentations may begin as early as February 27 if desired.

The course is designed around an interactive seminar learning environment. Students will be expected to participate in class learning through presentation and critique of both oral and written materials. Early class sessions will focus on scheduling and preparing the senior paper. **All students are required to read fellow students' senior seminars prior to the class presentation and to attend seminar presentations.** Note: depending on class size, adjustments may be made to the number of papers that need to be read and presentations attended. Students missing presentations must arrange for a make-up assignment with the instructors. Exceptions to the attendance policy may be considered because of medical or family emergencies, but all exceptions must be approved by the instructors and the academic dean. Evaluation will be based on written assignments, attendance, and oral presentation.

All written work *from therapy students* is expected in APA format. Please see *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th edition. The APA publication manual can be found on reserve at the Hiebert Library and at Pacific Bookshop. Another option is to purchase an APA template for MS Word entitled *APA Style Helper 5.1 (download for just under \$36)*. This may be purchased at www.apa.org/books. All written work *from ministry or theology students* is expected to conform to Chicago standards (sometimes referred to as Turabian), described in your textbooks, which are also on reserve at the Hiebert Library. All students are welcome to submit early drafts on scrap paper. **Deadlines for the course are taken seriously because of the intensive nature of the senior seminar project: late assignments will result in loss of one letter grade for each week late, or course fail without extension.**

VII. PREPARATORY ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading Log of Recent Papers and Preparatory literature. (5%). There are two parts to this reading log which are **due on the first day of class, January 30.**

A. **All Students** are required to read five (5) of the senior seminar papers listed below (on reserve @ Hiebert Library), and write a short paragraph for each paper (approximately two pages). Your entry should provide some critical interaction with each paper based on the author's thesis, organization, and use of supporting materials. You are encouraged to include papers from your program area of study and to use this opportunity to gather ideas for how you will construct your own senior seminar paper. Choose any 5 of the following papers:

- Buhler, Jay (2004). *Shame in the Absence of Fathers*.
 Buhler, Marcia (2004). *Life After Death (How couples deal with the death of a child.)*
 Cartney, Tom (1999). *American Individualism and God's Plan for Community*.
 Conkle, Beth (2007). *The Church in the World; A Living Expression of Shalom*.
 Enomoto, Kazuhiro (1998) *Seek Me and Live! (Christian Duty in the World of Atrocities – Based on a Reflection on the Nanking Massacre)*
 Fast, Sara (2004). *Theological Bridging Between Buddhism and Christianity*.
 James, Lori (2000). *Spiritual Integration in Therapy*.
 Kalmar, Laura (2000). *Turning Our Hearts Towards the Children*.
 Kasdorf, Illone (2007). *The Mennonites Shall One Day Dance*.
 Klassen, Randy (1992). *Hearing the Voice of Creation*.
 Morris, Jeanine (2007). *Walking Through the Shadow: A Step Toward Wholeness*.
 Penner, Annette (2000). *Sharing Not Only the Gospel, but our Very Lives*.
 Peters, Jeff (2004). *Following Jesus to the Cross: How the Cross Shapes and Defines Discipleship*.
 Thelin, Ruth (1999). *Christ, Chaos, and Kairos*.
 Thiessen, Sachiko (1996). *Home Within: Let the Lost Return*.
 Washio, Lisa (2007). *Living Simply in an Affluent Society*.
 Wiebe, Brian (1999). *Seized with Fear: Barriers and Breakthroughs in the Church*.
 Wooden, Ataloo (1995). *Speak O Lord: The Silence of God in Human Suffering*.

B. **MA and MDiv. Students** – are to write an additional summary (total 1 page, single-spaced) of the following:

Core, D. The Seminary Student Writes. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000.

Vanhoozer, K., et al., eds. “What is Everyday Theology? How and Why Christians Should Read Culture.” Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007. 15-60. (ON RESERVE)

MFCC students are expected to read widely in their chosen area of study. They are to browse the family studies literature and take careful note of how the authors develop and support their thesis. The reading log should include an additional summary (total 1-2 pages single-spaced) of the following material. One paragraph per book is sufficient. All material ON RESERVE at Hiebert Library.

Dym, Barry and Michael L. Glenn (1993) Couples: Exploring and understanding the cycles of intimate relationships. Harper Collins.

Imber Black, Evan and Janine Roberts (1993) Rituals for our times: Celebrating, healing and changing our lives and our relationships. Harper.

Lehan, James (1993). Defiant hope: Spirituality of survivors of family abuse. Westminster/John Knox.

McGoldrick, Monica, Ed. (1998). Re-visioning family therapy: Race, culture and gender in clinical practice. Jossey Bass.

Piercy, F. P., D.H. Sprenkle, J.L. Wetchler (1996) Family therapy sourcebook. 2nd ed. Jossey Bass. See chapter 14, “Research in Family Therapy”.

Pinsof, W.M., J.M. Gottman, C. I. Notarius, A.S. Gurman, P. Fraenkel “Marriage in the 20th century in western civilization: Trends, research, therapy and perspectives.” Family Process. Vol. 41, #2, Summer 2002. See also the articles in the previous issue on “Personal and Professional Impact of Terrorism”, Vol. 41, #1, Spring 2002, and the entire issue devoted to “Attachment and Family Systems”. Vol 41, #3, Fall, 2002; as well as “Issues of Race and Culture” in Vol. 41, #4, Winter, 2002. This is a bound volume of the periodical.

Roth, A., Fonagy, P. (1996). What works for whom? A critical review of psychotherapy Research. Guilford, 1996.

Sprenkle, Douglas (2002). Effectiveness Research in Marriage and Family Therapy. AAMFT.

- 2. Seminar Proposal, 1st Draft (5%).** Each student will prepare a four-page (double spaced) proposal relating to their topic. You must clear your selected topic with the instructor BEFORE proceeding with your paper proposal. Once you have selected a

topic, make an appointment with the instructor for consultation to ensure feasibility for the senior paper assignment. Choose a topic of interest to you with practical implications for therapy or ministry. The topic must not represent a topic you have already used for a major paper in another course. A list of sample topics is available on the reserve shelf of the library in the form of a comprehensive listing of all previous seminar titles. Ask for a “Bibliography of Senior Seminar Papers” at the front desk. **Be prepared to share your *approved* topic in class on January 30.** Your proposal should be completed after approval of the topic has been obtained.

Two copies of the proposal are due in class on February 6 and must include the following:

- issue to be addressed and short statement of problem or thesis (one page).
- biblical text(s) and exegetical outline showing relevancy of text to the topic chosen. Please note the textual unit, outline its structure, examine key words and identify the author’s intent in writing (two pages).
- Bibliography of major literature relevant to the paper (about 12-15 entries) (one page).

A proposed outline of the paper is also helpful.

3. **Revised Seminar Proposal (5%).** Proposal with revisions on the basis of feedback from peers and faculty *plus a concise thesis statement of 25-30 words.* **DUE DATE: February 13, 5:00 p.m.**

VIII. SENIOR PAPER AND RELATED ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Reading/Attendance/Participation (5%).** Students are to read each others’ senior papers prior to each presentation and to attend and participate in the class presentations. *A one-paragraph assessment* is due in class for each paper being presented. The assessment should show evidence of critical interaction with the paper based on the author’s thesis, organization, and use of supporting materials. **DUE DATE: In class on the day of presentation.**
2. **Peer Reader (5%).** Consultation will be formally available to each student from two “peer readers” assigned to each senior paper. You will be asked to sign up for two peer reading assignments at the beginning of class. The peer reader is to receive a draft copy of the assigned paper on or before the **draft copy due date, Monday March 10, 9:00 a.m.** The peer reader will give feedback and suggestions for strengthening the draft back to the author **no later than Monday, March 17.** (Please note: these dates will be modified to accommodate early presentation dates.) **Also note** that you will be asked to complete an evaluation of this experience of both giving feedback to your classmates and receiving feedback from peer readers.
3. **Senior Seminar Paper (50%).** The senior paper is 30 pages, double-spaced. Formatting will conform to the guidelines given under the “course format” section

based on degree program. Use 12-point Courier or Times New Roman font with NO right-hand text justification. Margins should be 1.5 inches on left, 1 inch on right to facilitate binding for Hiebert Library. The paper is integrative in nature, bringing together theological, biblical, and practical issues around three major sections:

- A. Analysis of the Issue (30% of length). This section should include a statement of problem that requires resolution via the thesis statement. The analysis section should locate a “gap” in the literature or practical realm of therapy/ministry experience that necessitates the thesis and its development. This section can include socio-cultural, political, economic, philosophical, theological, psychological, or other literatures. In the past, students have opted to augment this section with case studies, works of art, or even media presentations. The strength of the analysis section will determine the appropriateness and efficacy of the following sections.
- B. Biblical/Theological Discussion (35% of length). The senior seminar paper is designed to apply biblical and theological perspectives to real world issues. There are two options for this component of the project. Exegetical: Identify one significant biblical text that will be the basis for articulating the central perspective. The passage should not exceed 20 verses (exceptions should be cleared with the professors), and may be complemented with systematic and/or biblical theological text materials in addition to standard exegetical sources (e.g., commentaries, language tools). Exegetical findings should be evaluated in terms of context, both for the immediate scriptural texts, and for the broader teaching of scripture on the topic. Theological: Identify the theological perspective that will guide your interpretation of the issue. Articulate the theological framework clearly, developing its biblical basis and taking into account its historical and current formulations.
- C. Integration & Application (35% of length). This section pulls together the argument around the findings in section B, and extends this discussion into practical application. It is not appropriate to “proof-text” in this section, but rather to shed new light on your topic and related praxis. In this section you might also address issues of your faith tradition if these are relevant to the manner in which you integrate findings and practical application. In this section you will want to answer the reader’s implicit question, “so what?”

REVISIONS: Most students will have to make revisions to the paper after presentation, critique, student feedback, etc. A revised and/or corrected paper is given to the instructor for final approval. ***Please note, however, that the final grade for the paper is dependent on the version of the paper submitted on or by April 2.*** In addition to the two (2) final draft copies noted below, you must submit your final draft either on diskette or e-mail as a file for electronic archives. Please indicate if you are not willing to make your file available to others. If you object, your file will be archived and used only to make hard copies. If you do not

object, your paper may be sent to future students wishing to preview what you have written.

Senior Paper Due Dates:

1. **Draft copy:** To peer readers AND instructor **by Monday, March 10.**
2. **Penultimate copy:** 4 copies, 1 to the assigned critiquer, 1 to instructor, 2 to library reserve shelf so other students can read it, **by April 2.** **THIS IS THE COPY OF THE PAPER THAT WILL BE GRADED.**
3. **Final copy** (for archives): 2 revised copies AFTER presentation is over, 1 unbound to library for storage, 1 copy (bound or unbound) to instructor, **by April 30.** *Failure to turn in final draft by this date may delay graduation.*
4. **Senior Seminar Paper Presentation (15%).** The presentation should be approximately 15-20 minutes in duration and should be made from notes as opposed to reading the text of the paper. The presentation should clarify and highlight the main argument of the paper, and should include discussion of practical application (from section C). Creativity is strongly encouraged. Overhead transparencies or Powerpoint presentations are encouraged, along with other visual aids, props, etc. that serve as symbols. Past presentations have included the use of drama, and multi-media components. **The presenter should prepare a one-page synopsis of the paper for the audience, including a basic outline of the paper, a clear indication of thesis statement, and a few key findings.** Presentation dates will be arranged during the first part of the course. (Note: Early due dates for rough drafts and preliminary copies will be negotiated for those who present early).
5. **Senior Paper Critique (10%).** Each senior seminar paper will be formally critiqued by one student (8-10 minute oral presentation, 3-4 pages double spaced written report). Each student is required to do one critique of another paper, to be assigned at the outset of class. The critique should consider the adequacy of research, soundness of exegesis, supporting arguments, and practical application of the paper. It should identify the critical question raised by the paper or the contribution made. Issues pertaining to grammar, structure, etc. should not be the primary focus of the critique. *The critique should be both gracious and incisive.* **Due Date: Copies of the written critique should be given to the author AND the instructor no less than 24 hours PRIOR to the paper presentation to be critiqued.**

NOTES ON COLLABORATION

Students are encouraged to ask for help and critical review of the senior paper from their fellow students. In addition, students who wish to collaborate on their senior seminar paper are encouraged to do so. Students might individually present alternative or opposing viewpoints on a common theme, using the presentation time as a forum for debate. Owing to the complexities of this approach, collaborative efforts will have to be cleared with the instructor before the beginning of the spring semester.

SCALE

A = 90-100% Superior

B = 80-89% Expected

C = 70-79% Below Expectations

F = <69% Unacceptable

X. ADDITIONAL NOTES

A. Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, accommodations for disabilities, grading, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to an instructor or consult the Registrar.

B. Evaluation. "Student work will be evaluated by two standards: a) by what is considered the appropriate level of graduate performance, and b) by comparison with work submitted in a given class" (<http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/grading>). For this class, the following standards will also be applied to the seminar paper:

CLARITY OF WRITING (20%)

- Clear thesis statement
- Gives evidence of understanding and of engagement with the issues presented
- Ideas are clear, organized and arranged appropriately
- Uses observations, experiences, or illustrative material appropriately

LOGIC AND ARGUMENTATION (25%)

- Provides adequate evidence for thesis or argument
- Develops the evidence in a clear, comprehensible format
- Notes valid critique and/or antithesis where appropriate
- Documentation provided where needed (footnotes, notes, bibliography)

COMPREHENSIVENESS (20%)

- Adequately covers the topic; does not focus on only one idea
- Shows evidence of breadth and depth in resources consulted
- Demonstrates ability to integrate biblical and theological material and apply to contemporary issues

CREATIVITY (15%)

- Demonstrates creativity in choice of topic
- Shows creativity in treatment or presentation
- Thoughtful questions, research, ideas or projects are included

FORM AND STYLE (15%)

- Proof-reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling checks are completed
- Use of inclusive language
- Appropriate style (APA or Chicago) of notation is consistently and correctly followed

CARE AND PROMPTNESS (5%)

- Shows respect for peer readers, peer critique, and instructors
- Meets agreed upon deadlines

C. Submitting assignments. All assignments must be completed in order to be eligible to earn a passing grade for this course. Students are asked to submit hard-copy versions of their assignments to the instructor indicated in the assignment description above. The instructors will not print papers sent electronically as file attachments.

D. Course evaluations. Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.

DUE DATES FOR PAPER

Topic approved	January 30 (Wed.)
Reading log of recent papers and other preparatory literature	January 30 (Wed.)
First draft of seminar proposal	February 6 (Wed.)
Instructor feedback	February 8 (Fri.)
Revised paper proposal	February 13 (Wed.)
First draft of paper to peer readers and instructors	March 10 (Mon.)
Peer reader feedback / instructor feedback	March 17 (Mon.)
Presentations begin	March 19 (Wed.)
Penultimate copy	April 2 (Wed.)
Last date for presentation	April 30 (Wed.)
Final copy for binding	April 30 (Wed.)

DUE DATES FOR PRESENTATION

Written critique of paper from student reader	Day Before Presentation
One-page synopsis of the paper for audience	Day of Presentation