

## Syllabus

### MF 604 Counseling Couples

#### Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

Spring 2009      1 Unit

Tuesday 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

February 24, March 10, 17, 24, April 14, 21, 28

Instructor: David Bruce Rose, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: Mondays 2:30 - 4:00 PM, Wednesdays 2:00 - 4:00 pm, Thursdays  
10:30 - 12:30 am

#### Course Description:

Counseling Couples introduces current concepts and techniques in marriage therapy in the context of theological and biblical understandings of marriage and family processes. Presented in a workshop format, it will provide opportunity to apply theory and practice technique in supervised role plays. Normally, students will have completed MF512DS, Introduction to Counseling, prior to taking Counseling Couples.

FURTHER SUPERVISED TRAINING WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE STUDENTS  
MAY ASSUME COMPETENCY AT WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS AND COUPLES  
IN A THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP.

#### Objectives:

1. Students will be familiar with fundamental assumptions and practices of couples counseling.
2. Students will examine the role of spiritual and religious issues in counseling couples, with special emphasis on clarifying how their own beliefs interact with their role as a counselor.
3. Students will develop increasing competence in their ability to establish a therapeutic relationship and use appropriate interventions in their work with couples.

**Related Degree Outcomes:**

1. Apply biblical theological perspectives in serving and leading in culturally and religiously diverse ministry contexts. (3.3)
2. Articulate integrative views of humanity, theology, and counseling. (4.1)
3. Demonstrate appropriate use of one's personal self in response to human need. (4.3)
4. Demonstrate practice consistent with the laws and ethics that apply to marriage, family, and child counseling. (4.4)
5. Demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of counseling theories and techniques. (4.5)
6. Demonstrate proactive understanding, awareness, and relational skills across cultures, religions, and special populations. (4.7)

**Course Requirements:**

1. Personal Theology of Marriage Paper: Students will write a brief paper (three to seven pages) describing and supporting their theology of marriage. This paper should reflect Biblical Theology in that it should be clearly based on scripture. It is not expected to be an ultimate statement of the biblical theology of marriage but rather a milestone marking the student's current understanding. The paper should define and describe marriage from a biblical perspective and address important issues in marriage such as role of intimacy and love, roles in marriage (headship, egalitarian, or ?), divorce, and God's intent for marriage. Other issues may also be included. Cite scripture to support your argument. As this is intended to be a learning experience, the grade will be based on issues you choose to address, clarity and thoroughness of argument (75%) and appropriate use of scripture (25%), *not* on orthodoxy of the student's position. (5% of final grade) **Due March 10, 2009.**
2. Class Participation: Students will participate in class discussion, reflecting an understanding, analysis, and synthesis of the assigned readings. Extra Credit will be awarded to the two students who volunteer to participate in the role plays (10% of final grade).
3. Videotape viewing/Audiotape listening: Students will view a minimum of two hours of video recording of counseling demonstrations (not lectures about counseling) **of couples counseling**. The student is to keep a log citing the video/audio tape reviewed with a paragraph description of the techniques demonstrated. Extra credit will be awarded for additional time viewing videos. Questions regarding suitability of videos should be addressed to the

instructor. Videos are available either in Hiebert Library, the offices in the North wing, or at Alliant University (10% of final grade). **Due April 28, 2009.**

4. Examination: There will be one take home comprehensive final examination that will cover all of the theories and techniques of couples counseling covered in the class and in the reading. The examination may contain a mixture of multiple choice, fill-in, identification, short answer, essay questions, and case vignettes. Collaboration with other students is **not** permitted and no make-up examinations will be offered. Extensions will be permitted for documented family or medical emergencies only (75% of final grade). **Due May 8, 2008.**

Alternative/Extra Credit Assignments: Students learn in different ways. Students who have studied material presented in this course previously or who learn better using alternative methods, may negotiate alternatives for assignments with the instructor. Students who complete alternative or extra credit assignments will be required to demonstrate that they have at a minimum, met all of the course objectives.

**All written assignments are expected in the format of the American Psychological Association publication Manual, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Papers that are not presented in the appropriate professional format will be returned unread.**

The APA publication manual can be found on reserve at the Hiebert Library. Another option is to purchase an APA template for MS Word entitled *APA Style Helper 5.1*. Many summaries of APA format are available on the internet. One example is published by Vanguard University and can be found at:  
[http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc\\_id=796](http://www.vanguard.edu/faculty/ddegelman/index.aspx?doc_id=796)

**Grading Scale:**

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
F	< 70%

**Seminary Academic Polices:** 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, accommodation for disabilities, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, 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 the professor or consult the Registrar.

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

If a student wishes to have heightened confidentiality of assignment results, the student should submit the assignment in a self-addressed envelope. The assignment will be returned in the same envelope.

**Required Texts**

Gottman, J.M. (1999). *The marriage clinic: A scientifically based marital therapy*.  
New York: Norton.

Worthington, E.L., Jr. (1999). *Hope-focused marriage counseling: A guide to brief  
therapy*. Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity.

### Recommended Texts

Blankenhorn, D., Brown, D., VanLeeuwen, M.S. (2004). *Does Christianity teach  
male headship? The equal regard marriage and its critics*. Grand Rapids,  
MI: Eerdmans.

Jacobson, N.S., & Gurman, A.S. (2002). *Clinical handbook of couple therapy,  
Third Edition*. New York: Guilford.

Johnson, S. (2004). *The practice of emotionally focused couple therapy: Creating  
connection (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* New York: Routledge.

Schnarch, D. (1997). *Passionate marriage*. New York: Norton.

Stanley, S., Trathen, D McCain, S., & Bryan, M. (1998). *The lasting promise: A  
Christian guide to fighting for your marriage*. New York: Jossey-Bass.

### Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topics/Activities	Assignments Due
February 24	Class Introduction Introduction to The Marriage Clinic Introduction to Hope- Focused Marriage Counseling	Gottman Cpt. 1 Worthington, Cpts 1,2
	Healthy Marriage	Gottman Cpts 2, 3 Worthington Cpts 3, 4
March 10	Interventions: Establishing the Therapeutic Alliance	Gottman Cpt 6, 7 Worthington Cpts 5, 6 <b>Personal Theology Paper Due</b>
March 17	Interventions: Assessing the Context	Gottman Cpts 8, 9 Worthington Cpts 7, 8
March 24	Interventions: Managing Conflict	Gottman Cpts 10, 11 Worthington Cpts 9, 10
April 14	Interventions: Building Intimacy	Gottman Cpts 12,13 Worthington Cpts 11, 12

## Friesen

April 21	Interventions: Families with Special Issues	Gottman Cpts 14, 15 Worthington Cpts 14, 15 <b>Video Log Due</b>
April 28	Interventions: Explicit Religious Interventions	Worthington Cpts 15, 16 Sperry & Giblin

## Bibliography

- Adler-Baeder, F. & Higginbotham, B. (2004). Implications for remarriage and stepfamily formation for marriage education. *Family Relations, 53*, 448-458.
- Friedman, E. (1985). *Generation to generation*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Friesen, D. (2007). Mutual address and accountability in couples therapy. In D. S. Schipani (Ed.) *Mennonite perspectives on pastoral counseling*. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies.
- Fruzzetti, A. E. (2006). *The high conflict couple: A dialectical behavior therapy guide to finding peace, intimacy, and validation*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.
- Gordon, K. C., Baucom, D. H., & Snyder, D. K. (2005). Treating couples recovering from infidelity: An integrative approach. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 61*, 1393-1405.
- Gottman, J. M. & Silver, N. (1999) *The seven principles for making marriage work*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Greenberg, L. S., & Goldman, R. N. (2008). *Emotion-focused couples therapy*. Washington, D.C.: APA.
- Guerin, P.J., Jr., Forgarty, T. F., Fay, L.F., Kautto, J. G. (1996). *Working with relationship triangles*. New York: Guilford Press.

- Instone-Brewer, D. (2002). *Divorce and remarriage in the Bible: The social and literary context*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans
- Martin, B. (2007). *Fun loving: How to have a practically perfect relationship*. Fresno, CA: Author
- McGoldrick, M. & Gerson, R., & Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms in family assessment* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: Norton.
- McMurry, D., & Worthinton, E. L. Jr. (1993). *Value your mate: How to strengthen your marriage*. Grand Rapids: MI: Baker.
- Paolino, T. J. Jr., & McCrady, B. S. (1978). *Marriage and marital therapy: Psychoanalytic, behavioral, and systems theory perspectives*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Papp, P. (Ed.) (2000). *Couples on the fault line: New directions for therapists*. New York: Guilford.
- Pasley, I., Dollahite, D. C., & Ihinger-Tallman, M. (1993). Bridging the gap: Clinical implications of research findings on the spouse and stepparent roles in remarriage. *Family Relations*, 42, 315-322.
- Pittman, F. S., & Wagers, T. P. (2005). Teaching fidelity. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61, 1407-1419.
- Powell, J. (1974). *The secret of staying in love*. Niles, IL: Argus.
- Snyder, D. K. & Doss, B. D. (2005). *Treating infidelity: Clinical and ethical*

- directions. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 61, 1453-1465.
- Sperry, L., & Giblin, P. (1996). Marital and family therapy with religious persons. In E. P. Shafranske, (Ed.) *Religion and the clinical practice of psychology*. Washington, D.C.: APA.
- Thomas, G. L. (2000). *Sacred Marriage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Thompson, D. T. (1996). Women, men, slaves, and the Bible: Hermeneutical inquiries. *Christian Scholars Review*, 25(3), 326-349.
- Visher, J. (1994). Stepfamilies: A work in progress. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 22(4), 337-344.
- Witte, J. Jr., & Ellison, E. (Eds.) (2005) *Covenant marriage in comparative perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Helpful web sites include:**
- AAMFT, available at <http://www.aamft.org/>
- Prepare/Enrich, available at <http://www.prepare-enrich.com/indexm.cfm>