PSY570 Couples Counseling

Reformed Theological Seminary – Orlando
Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
3 credit hours
Spring Semester, 2009
Instructor: Scott Coupland, Ph.D
Office Hours: By appointment
Telephone: (407) 366-9493, ext. 238

PURPOSE
To examine the nature and proper functioning of marriage, gender issues in marriage, common couple patterns, and premarital/remarital and marital counseling strategies designed to promote harmony and instill hope.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS
1. The student will build a biblical pattern of marriage that is translatable into the identification and correction of couple problems.
2. The student will become familiar with common marital problem patterns.
3. The student will gain an understanding of various approaches to pre-marital and marital counseling.
4. The student will develop categories for the assessment and treatment of problems in marriage.
5. The student will learn strategies for counseling couples, and for addressing specific couple’s issues (e.g., separation and divorce, infidelity, violence).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND READINGS


*Available on reserve in the library.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK
**SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 5</td>
<td>Introduction to couples counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 12</td>
<td>Foundations of marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 19</td>
<td>Gender issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 26</td>
<td>Gender issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
<td>Gender issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 12</td>
<td>Couple patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 19</td>
<td>Premarital and remarital counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 26</td>
<td>No class, spring break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 2</td>
<td>Attachment theory in couples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The process of couples counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 9</td>
<td>The process of couples counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 16</td>
<td>The process of couples counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 23</td>
<td>Separation, divorce and remarriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 30</td>
<td>Infidelity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Violence, <strong>In-class final exam</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REQUIREMENTS**

1. Read assigned texts and supplementary chapters.

Due Friday, May 15, 2009 by 5:00 p.m.

2. Premarital and remarital counseling program handbook. You will prepare a six session premarital program with the purpose that you can use in premarital counseling.
   A. Make a decision on:
      a. The setting: private counseling practice or a church.
      b. The format of the program: couples counseling, group counseling, or a combination of both, and the use of mentors.
   B. The program must consist of:
      a. An introductory letter and contract. This letter is given to prospective couples for premarital/remarital counseling to introduce them to yourself and/or church and the premarital/remarital counseling you offer. (See *The Premarital Counseling Handbook* by H. Norman Wright, pp. 27-30 for samples. This letter/contract should minimally include:
         i. An introduction of yourself and, if applicable, the church.
         ii. A statement about your personal belief in the sanctity of marriage.
         iii. A statement about the purpose of premarital/remarital counseling.
         iv. A statement about the time, energy, and commitment involved in premarital/remarital counseling.
         v. Your expectations of the couple's commitment to the premarital/remarital counseling process.
         vi. An explanation of the premarital/remarital counseling process.
            - The format of the sessions
            - The number and length of sessions, and the time frame for completing the program.
- A brief outline of what will be covered during each session
vii. Any required reading or other resources
viii. Testing procedures (if applicable)
ix. Costs for sessions, testing (if applicable), and supplies
x. The wedding policy (in church-based setting)
xii. A sexual purity statement/contract

b. Six unique sessions. It is your choice as to what topics you cover in the six sessions. You may NOT use one particular premarital workbook as your program or the sole source of your materials. I want you to draw material from various resources, including your own ideas, and integrate them. There is a collection of premarital workbooks on reserve in the library to help you. Each session should be a separate section that addresses unique questions and issues. For each session include:
i. A counselor’s session outline. This includes a list of in-session discussion topics, homework review, and specific questions asked by the counselor (this is the counselor’s outline and is not given to the couple, so put it on a separate page).

ii. The client’s session material. This includes:
   - An outline of the material covered in that session.
   - Homework to be completed for the next session. The homework questions need to be typed out, NOT copied from published workbooks. Include introductory material for the topic(s), and instructions for completing the homework. Below each question should be sufficient room for a written response. There should be general questions for the topics, and then additional questions relevant to divorce and remarriage. There is a collection of premarital workbooks on reserve in the library to help you.
   - Required reading for the next session, if applicable.
   - List any assessments (e.g., PREPARE, TJTA, Myers Briggs) and time for feedback, if applicable

c. Format: Use a binder for your handbook, and labeled tabbed pages to separate the sections. Include a table of contents with page numbers. Font style and size is your choice, as long as it is readable.

Due Friday, May 15, 2009 by 5:00 p.m. at Earlene Harvey’s desk.

2. In class final examination. At the end of the last day of class, a series of movie and video clips will be shown. Students will respond to a multiple choice question or set of questions for each clip. The questions will assess the student’s ability to apply the material regarding gender issues, couple patterns, attachment styles, and counseling techniques to “live” scenarios. There will also be standard multiple choice questions related to the course material and readings.

May 7, 2009 in class.
GRADING

Reading: 20 points
Premarital/remarital counseling program handbook: 100 points
Final exam: 80 points
Total possible points: 200 points

Course grades will be determined by adding points from the percentage of assigned reading completed, the premarital/remarital counseling program handbook, and the final examination. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 194-200 points    C+ = 166-171 points
A- = 188-193 points   C = 160-165 points
B+ = 182-187 points   C- = 156-159 points
B = 176-181 points    D = 140-155 points
B- = 172-175 points   F = 139 points and below

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Classroom attendance and participation are required at all class sessions.

The handbook assignment must be submitted by the deadline. For each day the assignment is late, 5 points will be deducted from the score of the assignment. Extensions may be granted by the professor and only after approval by the academic dean. Extensions will be granted only for causes deemed adequate, and a written request is required.

Plagiarism/cheating will result in the failure of the course.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Christian Couples Counseling


Secular Couples Counseling


Premarital and Remarital Couples Counseling

Workbooks


**Finances**


Marriage

Sex

Men and Women
Required reading:


I read _____________% of this book.


I read _____________% of this book.


I read _____________% of this chapter.


I read _____________% of this chapter.

Due Friday, May 15, 2009 by 5:00 p.m. in Scott Coupland’s mailbox or to his email.