PSY634 Psychology in Relation Theology III

Reformed Theological Seminary - Orlando
Alternate Tuesdays, 8:30a.m. – 10:30a.m., 1 credit hour
Spring Semester, 2007
Instructors: Scott Coupland, Ph.D. and Chuck DeGroat, M.Div., M.A.
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PURPOSE

“Life in Christ is by nature communal” J. Knox Chamblin

This course is designed to help students integrate their thinking regarding the nature of Christian community. Students will address the unique challenges and possibilities of counseling professionals in a church setting. In doing so, they will be equipped to engage the church with wise and rich involvement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will:
1. Gain an understanding of nature of biblical community.
2. To prepare students for the challenge of leaving the safety of the RTS counseling community, and re-entering/engaging community in the future.
3. To understand the possibilities of community, what it can look like, etc.
4. Understand the challenges, and possible dangers, in churches.
5. Develop ways of living in, coping with, and prophetically challenging the church and pastors as counselors.
6. To challenge students to engage each other professionally and respectfully in a Roundtable dialogue format.

COURSE FORMAT

Roundtable dialogue

SCHEDULE and REQUIRED READINGS

A variety of readings on subjects related to the course. The readings are listed below, and are available at the library reserve shelf. The students are encouraged to add the texts and articles to their personal libraries, but are not required to for this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>Life after the MAC program: Opportunities and challenges.</td>
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Feb. 20  What is Christian community? Read Chapters 1 and 2 of Rod Wilson, *Counseling and Community* and Chapter 6 of W. Roberts and G. Marshall, *Reclaiming God’s Original Intent for the Church*

Mar. 6  Counseling pastors, their spouses, and persons in full-time ministry. Read Dan Allender, *Leading with a Limp* Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 4

Mar. 20  Professional counseling, pastoral counseling, discipleship, and spiritual formation: similarities and differences. Read Chapters 1 and 2 in David Benner, *The Care of Souls*

Apr. 10  Spiritual abuse in the church. Read three chapters of your choice from D. Johnson and J. VanVonderen, *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*

Apr. 24  Church discipline and counseling. Read Chapters 10, 11, and 12 in Dan Allender, *Bold Love*

May 8  Engaging the church as a counselor. Read Chapter 5 of Rod Wilson, *Counseling and Community* and Chapters 1-3 in Larry Crabb, *The Safest Place on Earth*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Complete required reading.**

2. **Attendance and participation in Roundtable dialogue.** The course format is dialogue-based, and students are to be prepared to discuss the course topic of the day in a way that reflects thoughtful interaction with the readings (not just personal opinion) and their professional experience through their RTS clinical internship. Showing up late and/or missing class will result in significant deductions in the student’s grade.

3. **Weekly “Roundtable Questions”:**

   a. Working on his/her own, the student must generate 5 questions based on the week’s readings. The questions will be typed and turned in to a professor at the beginning of each class beginning with the second class. Students must include their name and the date on each question. Select questions will be used for the roundtable dialogue. *(Example: Johnson and VanVonderen raise difficult questions regarding spiritual abuse on page 72. But how would I counsel my clients to deal with their spiritually abusive pastor if I was receiving referrals from him, and he was supportive of my counseling practice?)*

   b. The questions will be used by the professors to evaluate the student’s thoughtful interaction with the readings. Questions turned in later than the beginning of each class will result in a one letter grade deduction on the assignment, and subsequent deductions will occur every day until the questions are turned in.

4. **Final Exam:** The final exam questions will be a take-home, and taken from a list of possible questions (below). Five questions will be selected, and answers must be no longer than two pages, double-spaced.
1. Discuss the use of Frame’s *normative-situational-existential* construct as it relates to church discipline. Be sure to include the specific role of each one.

2. Delineate between pastoral counseling, clinical counseling, discipleship, and spiritual formation. Briefly describe the unique roles of each in the church.

3. Integrating Scripture, the readings, and your personal thoughts, reflect on the role of biblical *humility* and *wisdom* as you prepare to leave the program and interact with those who have not been exposed to the counseling program or have worked deeply on their own issues.

4. Elaborate on three main ideas that you viewed as significant and helpful from the class dialogue regarding counseling pastors and their spouses and/or families.

5. The counselor, whether he/she counsels in the church or outside of it, is ultimately a *servant* of Christ and the church. Discuss the three most significant concepts you have gained from class as it relates to a counselor’s interaction with the church.

6. Discuss wise ways to engage a narcissistic pastor. Use relevant assigned readings in your answer.

7. Discuss stories, metaphors, examples, or counsel in Scripture on how one ought to interact with unwilling, immature, or resistant people with wisdom, patience, long-suffering, and humility.

8. Discuss strengths and drawbacks between counseling in a clinical setting versus counseling in a church setting.

9. Evaluate Crabb’s basic thesis about making the church “the safest place on earth.” Discuss three strengths and three weaknesses in his position.

10. What is the purpose of church discipline? Describe one example of church discipline being administered in the New Testament. Discuss two ways in which church discipline can be effective, and two ways in which it can be detrimental.

11. What is biblical community? Discuss three aspects of biblical community from your readings and/or Scripture. Discuss three impediments to biblical community.

**GRADING SCALE**

Listed below are the assignments that will determine your final course grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance and Participation</th>
<th>40 points (deductions for late arrival to class)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roundtable Questions</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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A = 97-100 points  
A- = 94-96 points  
B+ = 91-93 points  
B = 88-90 points  
B- = 86-87 points  
C+ = 83-85 points  
C = 80-82 points  
D+ = 75-77 points  
D = 72-74 points  
D- = 70-71 points  
F = 69 points and below
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allender, D. Leading with a Limp
Allender, D. & Longman, T. Bold Love
Anderson, K. & Reese, R. Spiritual mentoring
Arnold, E. Why we live in community
Baker, J. & Gay, D. Alternative worship: Resources from and for the emerging church
Benner, D. Sacred companions: The gift of spiritual friendship and direction
Benner, D. The care of souls: Revisioning Christian nurture and counsel
Bonhoeffer, D. Life together: The classic exploration of faith in community
Brueggemann, W. Cadences of home: Preaching among exiles
Brueggemann, W. The prophetic imagination
Chamblin, K. Paul and the self
Cloud, H. & Townsend, J. Boundaries
Cloud, H. Safe people
Crabb, L. Connecting
Crabb, L. The safest place on earth
Crabb, L. SoulTalk
Dawn, M. Truly the community: Romans 12 and how to be the church
Gorman, J. Community that is Christian: A handbook on small groups
Grenz, S. The social God and the relational self
Grenz, S. Theology for the community of God
Hawkins, T. Cultivating Christian community
Kallam, J. Risking church: Creating a place where your heart feels at home
Kurtz, E. & Ketcham, K. The spirituality of imperfection: Storytelling and the search for meaning
Langberg, D. Counsel for pastors’ wives
Longnecker, R. Patterns of discipleship in the New Testament
Mason, M. The practice of the presence of people
McFadyen, A. I. The call to personhood: A Christian theory of the individual in social relationships
Moon, G. & Benner, D. Spiritual direction and the care of souls
Myers, J. R. The search to belong: Rethinking intimacy, community, and small groups
Nouwen, H. J. M. Can you drink the cup?
Peterson, E. Christ plays in a thousand places
Rediger, G. Clergy killers: Guidance for pastors and congregations under attack
Roberts, W. & Marshall, G. Reclaiming God’s original intent for the church
Scannuto, P. The Emotionally Healthy Church
Vanier, J. Community and growth
VanVonderen, J. & Johnson, D. The subtle power of spiritual abuse
Webster, D. D. Soulcraft: How God shapes us through relationships
Wilson, R. Counseling and community: Using church relationships to reinforce counseling
Wright, N. T. Following Jesus: Biblical reflections on discipleship
Yancey, P. Soul survivor: How my faith survived the church
Volf, M. *Exclusion and embrace: A theological exploration of identity, otherness, and reconciliation*