



# McMaster Divinity College

## MS 2A03 – PASTORAL COUNSELLING

September 14, October 5, November 2 & 30, 2014  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Instructor: Kelvin F. Mutter, Th.D.  
kfmutter @ gmail.com

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will examine the theory and practice of spiritual care and counseling in the context of Christian ministry. Emphasis will be on foundational counseling skills and processes within a framework of focused, short-term counseling. Particular attention will be directed to counseling in the crises and transitions of life. Students will also examine this theory, as well as other counseling theories, methods and processes, in light of theology, the realities of ministry, and topics of interest or concern that are relevant to the practice of ministry.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

Through required and optional reading, lectures, class discussion and exercises, and the completion of assignments, the student should fulfill the following course objectives:

#### ***Knowing***

- To understand the role, resources, processes, and boundaries of counseling in the context of Christian ministry.
- To learn basic helping skills for counseling in the context of Christian ministry.
- To learn a basic framework for short-term structured counseling in the context of Christian ministry.
- To gain a basic understanding of selected pastoral counselling topics.

#### ***Doing***

- To acquire educational preparation for counseling in the context of Christian ministry, but not certification for professional counseling.
- To practice basic helping skills through “hands on experience.”
- To practice using a short-term counseling model through “hands on experience.”
- To develop a personal framework for the work of counseling in the context of Christian ministry.

#### ***Being***

- To appreciate the healing potential of pastoral counseling as a ministry of the church.
- To be and become a responsible agent of hope, reconciliation and change in the lives of others.

- To experience the work of counseling in the context of Christian ministry (i.e., pastoral counseling) as one of “companionship” with another.
- Through reflection on practice, to become self-aware of the student’s potential strengths and short-comings as a pastoral counselor.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

**Required Texts & Materials: \***

Kollar, Charles A. (2011). *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

McMinn, Mark R. (2008). *Sin and Grace in Christian Counseling*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Mutter, Kelvin F. (2013). *Solution Focused Pastoral Counseling: Practice Guide and Workbook*.

Worthington, Everett L. (1999). *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

\* Required textbooks for this class are available from the College’s book service, R.E.A.D. On Bookstore. Texts may be purchased from the R.E.A.D. On outlet at McMaster Divinity College during the first part of the semester (including the first day of class). For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

**PROFESSOR:**

**Availability:** Dr. Mutter will be available for one-on-one consultation before and after class and during breaks on each of the four scheduled teaching days. Otherwise, students may contact him at kfmutter@gmail.com.

**Biography:** Dr. Kelvin Mutter is a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist (OAMFT/AAMFT), a Pastoral Counselling Specialist (CASC) and an Adjunct Professor at McMaster Divinity College. Dr. Mutter’s ministry and counseling experience includes: counseling individuals, couples and families; training seminary and social work students in the art of counseling; and, pastoral and lay leadership in several churches in Southern Ontario. Dr. Mutter is married and has three adult children.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Date	Class Topic / Discussion	Assignment
Sept 14 on campus	a.m. Introductory Matters	Pre-reading: Kollar chs. 1-7, 20; Mutter chs. 1-3, 5
	Solution-Focused Pastoral Counselling – I	
	p.m. Solution-Focused Pastoral Counselling – II	
Sept 16-21 Online Discussion	Drawing on the text and last Saturday’s class discussion, respond to the posted case study.	Kollar chs. 9-12; Mutter chs. 5-10
Sept 23-Oct 4		Kollar chs. 13-14;

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Date		Class Topic / Discussion	Assignment
			Mutter chs. 11-13
<b>Oct 5 on campus</b>	a.m.	Guidelines for Culturally Competent Counseling	
	p.m.	Counseling for Reconciliation	
<b>Oct 6-15 Online Discussion</b>		Drawing on the text and the class discussion, respond to the posted case study.	
<b>Oct 11</b>			Practice Counseling Assignment #1
<b>Oct 18</b>			McMinn chs. 1-4
<b>Oct 25</b>			McMinn chs. 5-8
<b>Nov 2 on campus</b>	a.m.	Counseling for Addictions and Mental Health Issues	Case Study Application of <i>Sin and Grace</i>
	p.m.	Counseling for Issues of Abuse in Families	
<b>Nov 4-9 Online Discussion</b>		Drawing on the text and last Saturday's class discussion, respond to one of the posted case studies.	
<b>Nov 15</b>			Practice Counselling Assignment #2
<b>Nov 30 on campus</b>	a.m.	Guidelines for Couple Counseling	Worthington (entire text)
	p.m.	Guidelines for Family Counseling	
		Guidelines for Counseling Adolescents	
<b>Nov 28 - Dec 2 Online Discussion</b>		Drawing on the text and last Saturday's class discussion, respond to one of the posted case studies.	

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Participation: \_\_\_\_\_ (30%).**

**1.1. Class Participation (on campus) (15%) .**

Class sessions will contain a mixture of lecture, discussion and case reflection. The participation grade will be assessed on the basis of the student's engagement with the material being presented and the student's ability to demonstrate familiarity with the texts.

**1.2. Online Discussion (15%) .**

Each student is expected to actively participate in the on-line class discussions. The course code/key will be announced at class rather than posted with this syllabus on the web. Because the web discussion depends on timely postings, posts will only receive credit if made by midnight of the due date. Posting well ahead of deadlines is encouraged as your comments are likely to invite comment or interaction

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from other members of the class. Thoughtful weekly participation and comments or questions that reflect the student is thinking through the readings or lectures will result in a higher grade.

- Grading (maximum of 5 points per week):
- Respond to the posted question – maximum 2 points
- Respond to another student's posting – maximum 3 points

**Guidelines for on-line discussions:**

- While the discussion board is only accessible to those who are registered in the course, it is still a "public space." Not every participant will have equal knowledge of other class members. Please keep this in mind as you decide how you interact and what you choose to share.
- Your comments must be pertinent to the question posed and/or the responses of others students.
- Please follow these guidelines:
  - Remember the words of Ephesians 4:29 – "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."
  - Do not type in all capital letters. Remember, typing in all capital letters is indicative of yelling in cyberspace.
  - Refrain from flaming. This means do not use these forums to verbally express anger, displeasure or other hostility towards any other member on this site.
  - Share personal information at your own discretion, remember this is an open forum. No one from this site will ever ask for personal information such as an email address or password.

**2. Course Readings:**

Students are expected to completely read the assigned texts and to demonstrate familiarity with these texts both in their written work as well as their class interactions.

**3. Practice Counselling Assignments (50%).**

Instead of exams, students are required to complete two practice counseling sessions (preferably with a classmate or fellow seminarian) **and** submit a verbatim report from a section of each of these exercises. These exercises are designed to assist you in your growth as a pastoral counselor. Please make sure the counselee has a copy of the instructions for the assignment.

**Note 1:** Papers will contain the following elements:

- 1 page introductory material,
- A counseling transcript (as per format provided). **These transcripts are to contain 15 counseling responses by the student.** In most cases, it is best to highlight one of the following portions: a) the conversation that begins with your Opening Question; b) the portion where you clarify what they wish to talk about (i.e., counseling goals and outcome or focus of the session); or, c) the section of the exercise that ends with your Closing statement or question.
- 1-2 pp. of reflection on the session (as per format provided).

**Note 2:** It is expected that the student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of basic counseling responses by accurately identifying which basic counseling skills are evident in this transcript.

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**Note 3:** It is expected that the student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of Kollar's model by accurately identifying which aspects of Kollar's model are evident in this transcript.

**Note 4:** Students are not permitted to submit a verbatim of an actual counseling session with someone they may be working with or who has sought their advice.

**a. Practice Counselling Assignment #1 (20 %) Due: Oct 11, 2013 .**

Instructions to the Student:

This is to be a **first session**. It is assumed that you only have superficial knowledge (if any) of the other person. Your task in this assignment is to: a) connect with the counselee, b) determine why they came for counselling, and c) use Kollar's model to guide you.

Instructions to the Counselee:

*These instructions have been kept brief so that you, the counselee, can create the script as you go. It is very important that you DO NOT tell the practice counsellor ahead of time what type of client you are going to be. It is part of the student's learning process to discern this from his/her interaction with you.*

In this exercise the counsellor will be trying to "connect" with you. All they know is you want to talk to them about something. Your task is to provide a "realistic" practice session for the counsellor. It is to their benefit that you do neither make the situation too easy. You need to be careful, however, that you do not unnecessarily frustrate the practice counsellor. You can bring any situation you want (i.e. self-esteem issues, parenting problems, spouse is unfaithful, depression, spiritual coldness, etc.). You decide: how nervous you will be, whether you will trust this counsellor with your secret, how much you will tell in the first session, or if you will 'test' the counsellor.

**b. Practice Counselling Assignment #2 (30 %) Due: Nov 15, 2013 .**

Instructions to the Student:

This is to be a **follow-up session** with the same counselee from Practice Assignment #1. Your task in this assignment is to: a) reconnect with the counselee, and, b) use Kollar's model to guide your work.

Instructions to the Counselee:

*These instructions have been kept brief so that you, the counselee, can create the script as you go. It is very important you DO NOT tell the practice counsellor ahead of time what type of client you are going to be or what may have transpired in your life since the first session. It is part of the student's learning process to discern this from their interaction with you.*

In this exercise the counsellor will be trying to "reconnect" with you. One of the things they will be interested in is whether or not your situation has worsened, remained the same or improved (the choice is entirely yours) since your last counselling session. Your task is to provide a "realistic" practice session for the counsellor. It is to their benefit that you do not make the situation too easy. You need to be careful, however, that you do not unnecessarily frustrate the practice counsellor. You can bring any situation you want (i.e. self-esteem issues, parenting problems, spouse is unfaithful, depression, spiritual coldness, etc.). You decide: how nervous you will be, whether you will trust this counsellor with your secret, how much you will tell in the first session, or if you will 'test' the counsellor.

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**4. Case Study Application of McMinn *Sin and Grace* ( 20%) Due: Nov 2, 2013.**

Students are to employ McMinn's *Sin and Grace* to reflect on and construct a pastoral response to **one of the following case studies** (2500 words). Students will be graded on their knowledge of McMinn's model, their ability to critically reflect on and identify key issues or themes within the case study; their ability to use McMinn's model to interact with the case study; and their ability to construct a realistic pastoral response to the case study.

**Case Study #1:**<sup>1</sup> You are disturbed in the middle of your supper and are told that the child of one of the leaders of your church has been hospitalized as a result of injuries sustained while in the company of the child of another church leader. Over the course of the next week you learn that the injuries are such that this child will require rehabilitation and it is uncertain as to the extent they will be able to resume a "normal life." Added to this, you learn that the police are investigating the incident because there are questions as to who is responsible for this injury. Finally, you learn that there was at least one bystander who recorded the entire event on their cell phone and that video has been posted on the internet where it has gone viral.

**Case Study #2:**<sup>2</sup> You receive a telephone call from someone asking to meet you at a local coffee shop. When you meet this person, he explains to you that he has recently been released from prison and that he is looking to begin his new life in your community. He also tells you that he accepted Christ as his savior while he was in prison. He then gives you the name and telephone number of the prison chaplain. This stranger then proceeds to tell you that he is looking for a Christian community who are willing to help him grow in his faith and to stay out of jail and wonders if your church might be able to provide him with this sense of community. He watches you carefully as you reflect on what you have heard, waiting for your answer. However, before you can answer, he tells you he doesn't believe he will be able to attend Sunday services because his Probation Order prohibits him from being where there are children.

**COURSE ADMINISTRATION:**

**College Style for Submission of Written Work:** All written work—unless informed otherwise by the professor—is to be submitted in accordance with the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses*, available on the McMaster Divinity College web-site (<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/MacStyleGuideSept1312.pdf>).

**Statement On Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy - <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

**Gender Inclusive Language:** McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are

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<sup>1</sup> The circumstances depicted in this case study are fictitious. Any similarity to any person living or dead is merely coincidental.

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examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

**Submission of Written Work:** With the exception of the **Online Discussion**, all written work is to be submitted by email in either MSWord format, “Rich Text Format” (i.e., &.rtf), or as an Open Office document. All assignments are due on the day indicated (by email before 5 p.m. of the day due). ***Late submission of assignments will be deducted one grade point for every late day.*** Graded papers will be returned to the student with comments in pdf format.

**Length:** Students are expected to adhere to the word count. If a paper exceeds the word count, grace will be accorded for the first 10%. However, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional 10% a paper exceeds the stipulated word count.

### **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

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- Browning, Don. *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1983.
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- Harbaugh, Jim. *A 12-Step Approach to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 1997.
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- Ramsay, Nancy J. *Pastoral Diagnosis: A Resource for Ministries of Care and Counseling*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998.
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- Switzer, David K. *The Minister as Crisis Counselor*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1974.
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- Tournier, Paul. *Guilt and Grace*. Translated by Arthur W. Heathcote. New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1962.
- Weist, Walter E., and Elwyn A. & Smith. *Ethics in Ministry: A Guide for the Professional*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990.
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