



## McMaster Divinity College

**MS 3X13/ 5X15/ 6X16**

### **Counselling Skills and Interventions**

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Winter 2024

Mon 9:00am to 10:50am

### **COURSE SYLLABUS**

#### **1. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Regardless of our specific calling, in any position in ministry we will find ourselves in a potentially therapeutic dialogue with others. Accurate and empathic listening coupled with effective communication is a requisite in encouraging growth or development within any of our relationships. This course will train the student in the microskills leading to empathic listening and effective growth-producing communication which is applicable in any specialization. While laying the foundation for a ministry in pastoral counselling, it will also enhance for all students our dialogues within the church, and between the church and the world. This course will require a certain level of self-disclosure, at a level of comfort of the student, and will rely heavily on practicing these microskills in class in the roles of “counselor”, “counselee”, and observer. All students are expected to take turns in all roles. Assignments will focus on analyzing transcripts of the student’s own “sessions” with volunteers both inside and outside of class. Grading will be based not on providing the “perfect response”, but on the ability to observe and analyze your own skills, receive and apply feedback, and be able to reflect on how to improve your own communication further. Communicating compassion for ourselves and others, is the overarching goal. Lectures will also include a survey of other basic intervention skills for specific situations most likely to be encountered during therapeutic dialogues.

**For advanced students (5X15/6X16)** additional reading and assignments are designed to explore in further depth the context, background and basic principles of pastoral counselling, specifically including the history of soul care and the relevance for integrating psychology and theology in pastoral counselling and chaplaincy. The final written project and presentation will allow the student to focus on one specific Christian practice intervention, and evaluate it from research, integrative, and ethical perspectives.

**SPECIALIZATIONS:** Counseling and Spiritual Care, Church and Culture, Christian World View,

#### **2. COURSE FORMAT**

**This is a live-streamed, in-person course, but the student is highly encouraged to attend in-person to get the most benefit of the course. Because of the high degree of skills practice in the class, students must commit to EITHER the live streaming option OR the In-Person option before class begins.** The class will be divided into 3-person groups which will remain consistent throughout the semester as either a live-stream group or an in-person group. Class sessions will include didactic instruction, video presentations, and structured dialogue exercises in class within your group, some of which will be recorded. Assigned readings for class sessions will

include interactive questions and practice responses in workbook format that must be completed before each class. Since this is a skills-development course, full participation in all class exercises is required. \*\* There is no class on Feb 19 for Family Day or Feb 26 for Hybrid week. **Because we lose a week of instruction due to Family Day, there is assigned reading due by the first day of class. See class schedule below.**

**For advanced students:** Additional required reading and development of the final project is the responsibility of the advanced student (see below). Doctoral seminar time will be available on a restricted basis with the professor in order to facilitate this project

### 3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**FOR ALL STUDENTS:** Since this is a skills-development course, the learning objectives for each specialization are the same.

#### ***Knowing***

- To distinguish the goals and phases a therapeutic dialogue, the roles of “counselor” and “counselee”, and the language of microskills
- To be able to correctly identify the different types of responses and interventions which might occur in dyadic communication or dialogue
- To discriminate the kinds of responses and interventions that are helpful or not helpful in promoting growth and change, and in specific situations in the therapeutic relationship

#### ***Being***

- To increase comfort with self-disclosure, within one’s own sense of safety and boundaries, and as appropriate to the assignments
- To increasingly practice empathic listening skills and effective responses in all our relationships
- To increase tolerance in hearing others’ pain and being open to the experience of one’s own pain.

#### ***Doing***

- To observe, identify, and demonstrate helpful versus non helpful responses in therapeutic dialogue
- To demonstrate microskills in noticing, reflecting, and validating both content and feelings in a dialogue, in order to establish relationship, encourage deeper exploration and growth, and consolidate learnings
- To demonstrate microskills in clarifying, confronting, using metaphors, and using authenticity, self-disclosure and immediacy to encourage growth and change

### **ADDITIONAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS:**

#### ***Knowing***

- To summarize the history of soul care and discuss the relevance of integrating psychology and theology in pastoral counselling
- To distinguish and identify unique Christian practices that can also serve as clinical interventions
- To discuss the ethical boundaries and guidelines for using Christian practices in counselling
- To evaluate the evidence supporting the clinical use of Christian practices in counselling

#### ***Doing***

- To research a specific Christian practice in counseling within the professional literature, and summarize, analyze and evaluate that literature in regards to evidence base, integration with counselling process, ethical considerations, and application in ministry
- To present a 20-minute lecture/presentation on your research to a graduate level class in counselling

#### 4. COURSE TEXTS

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

##### A. **Required Textbook for all students:**

Sbanotto, E.A.N., Gingrich, H.D., and Gingrich, F.C. *Skills for Effective Counseling: A Faith-Based Integration*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016. (450pp)

##### B. **Additional Textbooks for advanced students:**

Benner, David G. *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998. (238 pp)

Roberts, Stephen B., Ed. *Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Turner Publishing, 2012. (480 pp)

##### C. **Additional Required Articles for all students:** (provided on A2L, see Class Schedule)

Carlson, David E. "Jesus' Style of Relating: The Search for a Biblical View of Counseling." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 4 (1976) 181–92.

Hambrick, Brad. *The Pastor as Counselor: Role Definition, Process Clarity, and Skill Development*. (Jan 7, 2020) No pages. Pdf available online at, <https://bradhambrick.com/pastoras counselor/>. (Also available as 8 videos at this web address).

#### 5. INSTRUCTOR

**Biography:** Cathryn Harris, Ph.D. C.Psych. is an Assistant Professor (part time) at McMaster Divinity College. She is a Registered Psychologist (CPO) with competencies in both Clinical and Counselling Psychology, a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist, and Approved Supervisor in Marriage and Family Therapy with CAMFT, and a Certified EMDR Therapist. For 35 years, and currently fulltime, she has provided psychotherapy and psychological assessments to individuals, couples, families, children and adolescents in outpatient private practice. She has also worked in inpatient and day treatment programs, and provided consultation to pastors, teachers, and business professionals on individual and organizational issues. She has been continuously involved in the training and supervision of Christian mental health professionals for over 30 years, beginning as Adjunct Professor at Rosemead School of Psychology, and at Fuller Graduate Seminary for a short while, and for the longest time as Clinical Supervisor for a Christian counselling ministry that placed counselling interns in churches throughout Southern California. It has also been her privilege s to provide counselling skills training specifically to Pastors both in the past and currently at MDC. Dr. Harris has been married for over 30 years to another psychologist, and has one adult daughter who has managed to survive that experience.

**Contact and Availability:** Dr. Harris is available for one-on-one consultation briefly after class on the day class is scheduled in her office. Otherwise, students may contact her at [dr cathryn harris@gmail.com](mailto:dr cathryn harris@gmail.com). Please make sure you put "Counselling Skills" in the subject line of any email to rapidly identify your communication.

#### 6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

##### A. **Class Participation: Specialization Students - 20% of grade. Advanced Students\* – 10% of grade.**

Attendance, participation in class discussions, exercises and roleplays, and completion of assigned written response pages ("workbook" pages) for each chapter in the course text **before** class, are absolutely crucial

to the successful completion of this course. Completion of workbook assignments will not be graded, but will be recorded at the beginning of each class. \* **For advanced students:** This portion of the grade also includes the presentation at the end of term on the advanced Christian practices paper (see below).

## **B. Assignments**

### **i. Small Group Role Play Exercises and Transcript Analysis**

**Specialization Students - 35% of grade. Advanced Students – 25% of grade.**

Five small group exercises, to be completed in class, are delineated on pages 389-425 of the text to correspond with Chapters 4 through 12 according to the class schedule below. These involve video recording of the role plays, therefore access to a smart phone or other equipment with recording capabilities is required for in-person students. Each student must supply their own recording equipment. Live-streaming students will record on Zoom. For each roleplay, each student will transcribe their responses as “counselor” and analyze them. Microsoft Word has a transcribing function that will speed up this process, but the result must be proofed and corrected. This written assignment is due the week after each role play, according to the class schedule below. A template for the roleplay analysis is given in the text, and an MS Word version will be provided on A2L. (Note: You must not be in a small group with someone with whom you are in a romantic relationship. All-male groups are to be avoided. You must also counsel and be counseled by both of your other group members at various points in the semester.)

Assignments will grow in their point value as the semester progresses:

Chs 5, 7, 9 = 15 points each; Chs 10, 12 = 25 points each; Total converted to percentage of total grade.

### **ii. Final Interview Project**

**Specialization Students - 45% of grade. Advanced Students – 40% of grade**

In this summative project, the student will conduct a 45-60 minute therapeutic dialogue or helping session with a volunteer from outside the class who serves in the role of counselee. The format will be similar, but more extensive than the roleplay assignments above. The session is recorded and transcribed and the digital recording or a link to the recording will be handed in to the instructor with the written analysis. The session can be conducted any time after Chapter 12 is completed in class on Feb 19th. It is best to have your volunteer scheduled and your equipment prepared beforehand, so that you can do your session as soon as possible after Feb 21<sup>st</sup>. Full details of the project are given on pages 425-439 of the text. The student’s analysis and critique of their counselor behaviors will review all the microskills used as taught in the course, as well as observations of their personal responses in the session, and reflection on their growth challenges. A template for the session analysis is given in the text and will also be available through *Avenue to Learn*. The project is due on the day of the last class. *Late submissions will not be accepted.*

### **iii. Integrative Paper: Advanced Students Only – 25% of Grade**

Tan (2011) has suggested that there are four distinct areas unique to pastoral or Christian counselling, one of which is “unique methods that go beyond standard counselling skills and techniques” (p.16). Imagine that you are being interviewed by the CRPO to give justification for using a spiritual intervention in your counseling approach. Your advanced project for this course is to develop a bibliography, paper, and 20 minute presentation describing one specific and unique Christian practice in pastoral counselling, highlighting the research evidence base for the practice, discussing how it can be seen integratively as a clinical intervention not just a spiritual intervention, and providing guidelines for its effective use, including consideration of ethical issues. The specific practice you choose and your bibliography must be approved by the instructor to avoid duplication between students (email instructor,

and order of submission will be respected). Details of the assignment will be provided in the first day of class. The presentation will be made on the second to last or last lecture day of the course, depending on the number of advanced students enrolled.

**A. Bibliography and Reading: Due Feb 19th**

The required texts will provide context and background for evaluating your review of one selected Christian practice from an integrative pastoral counselling perspective, and can be included in your project. You will additionally research and construct a bibliography of additional sources on your chosen practice specifically, according to the requirements of your degree (see below). A selected bibliography is provided on A2L as a starting point and gives some examples of specific practices you can choose from, as well as their analysis, but this list is purposely not exhaustive and will need to be updated for your project in terms of most recent research and perspectives. References can include books and/or professional articles\*. The following journals are recommended but not exhaustive: *Journal of Christianity and Psychology*, *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *Journal of Pastoral Care*, *Pastoral Psychology*, *Journal of Religion and Health*, *Journal of Pastoral Theology*. (\*Internet articles or blogs are not acceptable.)

**DPT Students (MS 5X15)** – Minimum of additional 15 references

**MA/PhD Students (MS 6X16)** – Minimum of additional 20 references

**B. Advanced Students' Paper: Due March 11<sup>th</sup>**

**DPT Students (MS 5X15)** – Minimum 20 pages    **MA/PhD Students (MS 6X16)** – Minimum 25 pages

- a. Choose an appropriate title for your project, and include a brief introduction as to its relevance for ministry.
- b. Describe the specific Christian practice to be used in counselling, its history of development and biblical foundation as relevant.
- c. What research supports the use (or contraindicates the use) of this practice in counselling? Review the literature relevant supporting it as an “evidence-based” practice. If there is no research, or no empirical support for this practice, are there other reasons it might still be justifiably included in counselling?
- d. How can this spiritual intervention be seen from an integrative psychological perspective? Egs. What aspects of effective counselling does it parallel or incorporate? In what ways would it advance the more general goals of counselling? Does it address psychological themes relevant to counselling and human growth?
- e. What guidelines are suggested to use this intervention most effectively? Egs. When and how should be introduced in the counselling process? What are the indications and counter-indications for its use? Are there any ethical considerations in its use, and how should these be navigated?
- f. Include an appropriate conclusion section, summarizing your findings.

## 7. COURSE ADMINISTRATION

**College Style for Submission of Written Work:** All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/> This includes spelling, grammar, and syntax accuracy. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. Students are encouraged to have someone proficient in English proofread their work.

**Statement On Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent

means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

**Gender Inclusive Language:** McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSV (2021), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

**AODA:** In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

### **Submission of Written Work:**

This course is uniquely structured so that the book assignments prepare the student for what will be practiced in class. Therefore, the following will be strictly observed:

- 1. Chapter assignments:** Due at the beginning of each class. **Docked 50% for late submission.**
- 2. In-Class Role Play assignments:** Due at the beginning of each class, they must be submitted online through A2L. An MS Word template is provided. If a student is unavoidably absent for a class in which a small group assignment is given, he/she is expected to practice the targeted skill in the counselor role with at least one other student in his/her group outside class time and still submit the written assignment on the date due. If a group member is missing, the remaining two group members should go ahead with the small group during class time unless it is certain that the entire group can get together to complete the assignment on time. **Late submissions will be docked 50%.**
- 3. Final Interview Project:** Must be handed in on Avenue to Learn, with digital audio/video recording uploaded as well (digital format to be explained in class). ***Because of the grading time involved, late submissions will not be accepted after midnight on March 25<sup>th</sup>.***

**Cell Phone/Computer Policy:** Students are to refrain from texting or conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom or video conference. The same policy applies to all computer-generated sound schemes or other electronic annunciation systems.

**Copyright:** *This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.*

8. COURSE OUTLINE : READINGS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE (Due on class date indicated)

**\*\* All assigned questions in each chapter are to be answered in written form and uploaded before class\*\***  
**\*\* Assigned questions will be announced in class\*\***

**Week 1 - Monday, Jan 8<sup>th</sup> -**

**Reading Assignment Due:**

Sbanotto et al, Introduction and Chapters 1&2 (pp.1-54) (54 pgs); Carlson article (on A2L)

**Lecture Topics: Introduction and Introductions -** Goals and Expectations of the Course

**Foundations for Therapeutic Dialogue I**

Definition of Pastoral Counselling

Relationship as the Foundation of Change

The Nature, Importance and Function of Empathy in Relationship

**Week 2 - Monday, Jan 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Chs. 3, 4 & 5 (pp.55-110) (54 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Lecture Topics: Foundations for Therapeutic Dialogue II**

Microskills: **Noticing While Being Present in the Room**

Microskills: **Identifying the Pieces of the Story**

**Small Group Role Play in class:** Ch. 5 Reflecting Content (pp.392-393)

**Week 3 - Monday, Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Chs. 6 & 7 (pp.111-150) (48 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Role Play Worksheet Due:** Ch.5 Reflecting Content (pp.393-395)

**Lecture and Discussion Topics: Foundations for Therapeutic Dialogue III**

Microskills: **Validating Emotion**

Microskills: **Connecting Empathically**

**Small Group Role Play in class:** Ch. 7 Basic Level Empathy (pp.396-399)

**Week 4 - Monday, Jan 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Chs. 8 & 9 (pp.151-190) (39 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Role Play Worksheet Due:** Ch. 7 Basic Level Empathy (pp.400-403)

**Lecture and Discussion Topics: Microskills: **Zeroing In (Clarifying)****

Microskills: **Connecting Deeply (Intuitive Empathy)**

**Small Group Role Play in class:** Ch. 9 Clarifying & Intuitive Empathy (pp.412-417)

**Week 5 - Monday, Feb 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Ch. 10 (pp.191-210) (19 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Role Play Worksheet Due:** Ch. 9 Clarifying & Intuitive Empathy (pp.412-417)

**Lecture and Discussion Topics: Microskill: **Metaphor****

**Small Group Role Play in class:** Ch. 10 Clarifying, Intuitive Empathy & Metaphor (pp.412-417)

**Week 6 - Monday, Feb 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Chs. 11 & 12 (pp.211-252) (41 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Role Play Worksheet Due:** Ch. 10 Clarifying, Intuitive Empathy and Metaphor (pp. 412-416)

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** Microskills: **Confrontation**

Microskills: **Using the Here and Now (Immediacy)**

**Small Group Role Play in class:** Ch. 12 Assignment, include Confrontation practice (pp. 416-425)

**Week 7 - Monday, Feb 19<sup>th</sup>: *FAMILY DAY HOLIDAY – READING WEEK NO CLASS***

**ADVANCED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

**Role Play Worksheet Due:** Ch. 12 Assignment, Immediacy and Confrontation

**Week 8 - Monday, Feb 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Hambrick (read pdf on A2L (39pgs) and/or watch 6 part video series)

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** **Managing Ethical and Legal Boundaries in Pastoral Counselling**

**Week 9 - Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>:**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Ch. 13 (pp.253-274) (21 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** Microskills: **Strategies for Growth/ Implementing Change**

Intervention: Increasing Coping and Emotional Regulation Skills Part 1

**Week 10 - Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>**

**ADVANCED STUDENT PAPER DUE**

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** Microskills: **Strategies for Growth/ Implementing Change**

Intervention: Increasing Coping and Emotional Regulation Skills Part 2

**Week 11 - Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Ch. 14 (pp.275-296) (21 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** Microskills: **Thinking Systemically and Using the Relational System**

**Week 12 - Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>:**

**FINAL INTERVIEW PAPER DUE**

**Reading Assignment Due:** Ch. 15 (pp.297-320) and Appendix D (pp.441-450) (31 pgs)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** Microskills: **Appreciating the Sacred**

Intervention: Spiritual Practices as Clinical Intervention

**Advanced Students' Presentations**

**Week 13 - Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup>:**

**Reading Assignment:** Ch. 16 (pp. 321-346) (25pp)

**Assigned Questions Due:** TBA

**Lecture and Discussion Topics:** Microskills: **Wrapping up: Endings and New Beginnings**

Interventions: Bringing Closure, When and How to Make Referrals

**Course Evaluations Due**