

FOUNDATIONS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

SYLLABUS

Course Description

- This course is an overview of current trends in counseling theory and practice, and the role of counseling—most specifically, Biblical counseling—in public, private, and church settings.
- Basic counseling skills taught in this course include interviewing, assessment, and therapeutic listening in a counseling situation.
- Application is made to common matters, including premarital, family crisis, grief, substance abuse counseling, and sexual issues.
- Underlying emphasis is on developing Biblically consistent strategies and applying Scriptural principles.

Course Objectives

- To equip the students to do the work of counseling from a scriptural standpoint.
- To equip the students to train others to do the work of counseling.
- To introduce the students to the knowledge-base and categories necessary to engage and evaluate secular methods of helping.
- To model a method of evaluating secular theories of psychotherapy from an apologetic and evangelistic standpoint.
- To model a method of gleaning common-grace insights from secular theories of psychology in light of God's Word.
- To demonstrate that pastoral/Biblical counseling needs to be Bible-based, God-honoring, Christ-centered, Spirit-powered, Church-located, Elder-led, Lay-involved, Family-focused, and Neighborhood-involved.

Required Reading

- **Bulkley, Ed.** *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993.

Although this was written over twenty-five years ago, the same discussion is still taking place within the Christian community: Where should Christians turn for healing of deep emotional hurt and entrenched sin behavior? Dr. Bulkley puts the discussion within the larger context of the increasingly urgent need within Christendom for finding solutions to ever-greater human sin, suffering, and woundedness.

- **Hoekstra, Bob.** *How to Counsel God's Way*. Murrieta, CA: Living in Christ Ministries, 1999.

A concise yet easy-to-follow treatise on Christian counseling from a non-integrationist perspective.

- **Wright, Rogers H., and Cummings, Nicholas A., eds.** *Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well Intentioned Path to Harm*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Group, 2005

This book begins with the assumption that the atmosphere of intellectual openness, scientific inquiry, aspiration towards diversity, and freedom from political pressure that once flourished in the APA has been eclipsed by an "ultra-liberal agenda," in which voices of dissent, controversial points of view, and minority groups are intimidated, ridiculed, and censored. It is intended to help consumers, practitioners, and policymakers to become better educated about a variety of recent issues and trends that have significantly changed the mental health fields.

- **Vancouver Bible Institute.** *Why Biblical Counseling?* Vancouver, WA: Truth in Love Communications, 2012
- Various class handouts
 - Handouts are provided on a number of subjects for the course. These are included in a Supplement Resources book. Keep these handy and refer to them often; they are exceedingly helpful tools.

Recommended Reading (Books marked with *∞* are Honors reading)

- **Adams, Jay E.** *Competent to Counsel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.

First published in 1970, this book has gone through over thirty printings. It established the bases for an introduction to an approach to counseling that is being used in pastors' studies, in counseling centers, and across dining room tables throughout the country and around the world.

- **Breggin, Peter Roger.** *The Anti-depressant Fact Book*. NY: Perseus, 2001.
The drug revolution in psychiatry is actually of recent origin having begun in earnest only a few decades ago. There is now an unsettling pattern of discovering the unintended side effects of a compound only after many years of administration in the field, e.g., Valium. See also www.breggin.com.
- **Breggin, Peter Roger and Cohen, David.** *Your Drug May Be Your Problem, Revised Edition: How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications*, Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press, 2007.
This is the only book to provide an uncensored description of the dangers involved in taking every kind of psychiatric medication when first published in 1999; it was also the first and only book to explain how to safely stop taking them. Since then, there have been numerous studies suggesting or proving the dangers of some psychiatric medications, and even the FDA now acknowledges the problems; more studies are underway to determine their long-term and withdrawal effects.
- **Carlat, Daniel.** *Unhinged: The Trouble with Psychiatry - A Doctor's Revelations about a Profession in Crisis*. NY: Free Press, 2010.
Psychiatrist Daniel Carlat exposes deeply disturbing problems plaguing his profession, revealing the ways it has abandoned its essential purpose: to understand the mind so that psychiatrists can heal mental illness and not just treat symptoms.
- **Ganz, Richard.** *PsychoBabble: The Failure of Modern Psychology—and the Biblical Alternative*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.
Foreword by Dr. John MacArthur, this book seeks to examine and explain the dichotomy between secular psychology and Biblical counseling. As the title suggests, the author has no love lost for secular approaches.

Goldman, Steven. *Science in the Twentieth Century: A Social-intellectual Survey*. Chantilly, VA: The Teaching Company.

Dr. Goldman shows the tremendous change in the approach of science from 1900 to 2000, from the study of things to the study of relationships, and its increasing “priestcraft” of mathematics.

- Johnson, E.L. and Jones, S. L., eds. *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000

This work provides the opportunity to examine defenses for the four prevalent views related to counseling within the context of Christianity and the Church in our current context.

- Playfair, W. *The Useful Lie*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991.

A medical doctor and student of theology, Dr. Playfair reviews the empirical research and the biblical principles necessary for an evaluation of 12-step programs, a popular method for counseling with life-dominating problems.

(NOTE: This is one of the Required Reading books for the Addiction & Recovery Models Module.)

- Powlison, David. *The Biblical Counseling Movement: History and Context*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2010.

An objective look at the anti-psychiatry/psychology movement within Conservative Protestantism that has been on-going since the 1970's.

- **Robinson, Daniel.** *Philosophy of Psychology (Critical Assessments of Contemporary Psychology)*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989.

Robinson, with expertise in neuropsychology, history of psychology, and philosophical psychology, squarely addresses fundamental problems that professional psychologists have tended either to neglect or to assume are negligible. He challenges much of the “conventional wisdom” on the nature and prospects of psychological “science.”

- **Sommers, Christina and Satel, Sally.** *One Nation Under Therapy: How the Helping Culture is Eroding Self-reliance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005.

“Ideas have consequences” ... such as the cultural effects from how we see the counseling enterprise. At both individual and social levels, modern psychology has affected our expectations for living in good times and bad. While the Biblical counselor will not want to embrace the intermittent Stoicism of the authors in exchange for reliance on the Lord and His Word, here is critical thinking—from a secular perspective—about the results of psychological theories that have been tried and rejected by even the academic world.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

For those students seeking to benefit the most from the course, completing the following assignments will do the most to ensure that. **Working toward a grade is not necessary to pass the course.** Of course, the more of the assignments completed, the greater the benefit to you and your future counselees.

Summary of Assignments

- Attend lectures and participate in role-plays.
- Final Exam
- Course Paper
- Counseling Dialogue
- Reading Synopses
- Course Application Paper

Class Participation (30%)

Participation in class discussions and role-plays is critical to ensuring a sure grasp of the material.

Reading Synopses (30%)

A chapter-by-chapter, one- to two-paragraph per chapter synopsis of each book on the Required Reading list, with a final personal assessment of the work as the conclusion.

One of the Following Course Papers (40%):

Critique Paper

One three- to five-page description and critique of the theory and practice of a major modality or school-of-thought of secular psychology. Use footnotes for references.

Counseling Dialogue

One three- to five-page imaginary dialogue between a Biblical counselor and a (1) scientific **or** (2) subjectivist professional counselor.

Course Application Paper

One three- to five-page imaginary dialogue between a Biblical Counselor and counselee of your choosing.

When Assignments Are Due for Grading

All assignments not given a specific “when due” in the “Reading and Assignment Schedule” (Syllabus Page xii) are due the last day of the course. All assignments are to be submitted in electronic form, either in an email or as a Google Doc with the instructor invited to comment. Extensions must be pre-approved prior to the relevant due date.

Honors

Honors Reading: Read any Recommended Reading list item marked ➤. Submit a three- to five-page summary/analyses of the work.

Honors Project: Submit an original research paper on any approved topic. The topic must be taken from the lectures, the required reading, or the recommended reading.

Final Course Grade Meanings

A with Honors = You far exceeded expectations and completed an Honors Project or Reading.

A = There were dimensions to your work that went above the requirements.

B = At VBI, a “B” means that you successfully fulfilled the requirements.

C = You missed some important facets of the material or the assignment.

Contact Information

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COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1

- ✓ Introduction and Syllabus
- ✓ Basic Theories of Change

Session 2

- ✓ Views on Integration
- ✓ Basic Biblical Model

Session 3

- ✓ History of Psychology (Part 1)

Session Four

- ✓ History of Psychology (Part 2) – Video Presentation
- ✓ Pioneers of Modern Psychology

Session Five

- ✓ Modern Modalities
- ✓ The Biblical Model & Galatians 1-2

Session Six

- ✓ Interviewing and the Counseling Process (Part 1)
- ✓ Processes of Change

Session Seven

- ✓ The Counseling Process (Part 2)

Session Eight

- ✓ Anger & Depression (Fear & Worry)

Session Nine

- ✓ Sexuality, Abuse, and Neglect
- ✓ An Introduction to Counseling Survivors

Session Ten

- ✓ Addiction, Reality Therapy, and 12-Step Programs

Session Eleven

- ✓ Biblical Counseling and Common Grace

Session Twelve

- ✓ 1 Thessalonians 5 and Counseling

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

LESSON	READING	ASSIGNMENT	DUE
* PRIOR TO CLASS SESSION 1	Bulkley; Parts 1 & 2, plus Appendix A Hoekstra; Sections 1 & 2 Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 1	This reading needs to be completed prior to the first session.	CLASS SESSION 1
LESSON 1	Bulkley; Part 3 HANDOUT: <i>Ambiguously Cured Soul</i> HANDOUT: <i>Affirmations & Denials</i>		WEEK 2
LESSON 2	Bulkley; Part 4 Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 5 VBI Booklet, <i>Why Biblical Counseling?</i>		WEEK 3
LESSON 3	Hoekstra; Section 3 HANDOUT: <i>Biblical Psychology</i>		WEEK 4
LESSON 4	Hoekstra; Section 4 Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 8		WEEK 5
LESSON 5	Bulkley; COMPLETED Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 9		WEEK 6
LESSON 6	HANDOUTS: ¹⁾ <i>Anger, Parts 1-3</i> ²⁾ <i>Counseling Those Who Are Depressed</i> Hoekstra; COMPLETED	Reading Synopsis, Bulkley	WEEK 7
LESSON 7	HANDOUTS: ¹⁾ <i>A Theologically-Informed Approach to Sexual Abuse Counseling;</i> ²⁾ <i>Predator, Prey, and Protector</i> Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 11	Reading Synopsis, Hoekstra	WEEK 8
LESSON 8	HANDOUTS: ¹⁾ <i>Addictions: New Ways of Seeing, New Ways of Walking Free;</i> ²⁾ <i>The Neurobiology of Addiction</i>		WEEK 9
LESSON 9	Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 13		WEEK 10
LESSON 10	HANDOUT: <i>12-Steps: Tools for Another Gospel?</i>		WEEK 11
LESSON 11	HANDOUT: <i>What if Your Father Didn't Love You?</i> Wright/Cummings; to end of Chapter 15	All remaining assignments DUE WEEK 12	WEEK 12
LESSON 12		ALL ASSIGNMENTS DUE	

Assigned reading can be done at your own pace, but be prepared to bring reading assignment information into the class discussion during the next week's Lesson following the week listed. Assignments listed "**Handout**," are found in the "Supplemental Materials" Guide.