

Introduction to Pastoral Counseling

Loren L. Townsend, Ph.D.
Henry Morris Edmonds Professor of Pastoral Ministry and
Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling
214 Gardencourt
ltownsend@lpts.edu

Description

This course provides a foundational orientation to pastoral counseling as a practice of ministry and as a theological bridge discipline connecting ministry and marriage and family therapy. The class will: (1) examine and critique the historical and cultural contexts that formed pastoral counseling; (2) explore contemporary, multicultural expressions and practices of pastoral counseling; and (3) develop a beginning set of theological and counseling resources to guide practice and anchor a practical bridge between ministry and marriage and family therapy. The course attends to parish counseling and counseling by marriage and family therapist specialists.

Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Be able to describe and discuss the history of pastoral counseling, its roots in twentieth-century clinical pastoral care movements, and its connection to traditions of psychotherapy.
2. Be able to discuss and critique pastoral counseling's history and practices in the light of multicultural and inter-religious realities, and a multiversal approach to psychotherapy.
3. Be able to describe pastoral counseling as a theological discipline bridging ministry and marriage and family therapy.
4. Identify a personal position for relating theology and behavioral sciences.
5. Develop a beginning understanding of empathy, therapeutic relationships, and pastoral presence and how to employ these in counseling practice.
6. Demonstrate beginning ability to use fundamental counseling skills of joining, assessing, treatment planning, and carrying out a course of treatment.
7. Demonstrate a beginning understanding of how spirituality, religious faith, and resources of communities of faith can be integrated ethically and appropriately into counseling practice.
8. Be able to describe a beginning framework for theological and ethical reflection on their work in counseling.

Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

This course addresses the following SLOs:

SLO 1a: Ability for all MFT seniors to pass the seminary MFT exit exam

SLO 2: Ability to present and defend a video tape and final case study that demonstrates entry level professional competence

SLO 4: Ability to write a final theological integration statement accompanying their senior case study that is acceptable to the MAMFT Graduation Evaluation Committee

SLO 6: Ability to meet all standards for *Fellow* in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors

Electronic devices in class

Electronic devices, including telephones, are not to be used during class sessions without professor's permission. Computers may be used for note taking or other tasks directly related attending to class material. **It is inappropriate to text, update your Facebook page, surf the net, playing video games or twitter your experiences while in class.** This is distracting to other students undermines learning. Students in practicum should not make or accept calls from clients during class. Consult your supervisor if necessary. Students who disregard this policy will be asked to leave class.

Primary Texts (entire text to be read)

Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction to Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon
Wimberly, E. (1994). *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
Wimberly, E. (1990). *Prayer in Pastoral Counseling*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.
Pergament, K. (2007). *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*. NY: Guilford Press.
Townsend, L. (2006). *Suicide: Pastoral Responses*. Nashville: Abingdon Press

Book Review Texts (read one of the following)

Ashbrook, J. (1996). *Minding the Soul: Pastoral Counseling as Remembering*. Minneapolis: Fortress
Gorsuch, N. (2001) *Introduction to Feminist Pastoral Care and Counseling*. St. Louis: Pilgrim Press.
Neuger, C. (2001). *Counseling Women: A Narrative Pastoral Approach*. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press.
Smith, A. Jr. (1982). *The Relational Self: Ethics and Therapy from a Black Church Perspective*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Selections from the following texts (See course schedule for reading assignments)

Bidwell, D. and Marshall, J. (eds). (2006). *The Formation of Pastoral Counselors: Challenges and Opportunities*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
Demarinis, V. (1986). *Critical Caring*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
Farris, J. (ed) (2002). *International Perspectives on Pastoral Counseling*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
Hunter, R. (2005). *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. Knox Press.
Neuger, C. C. (Ed.) (1996). *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist and Womanist Approaches*. Louisville: John
Ramsay, N. (ed) (2004). *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*. Nashville: Abingdon.
Schlauch, C. (1995). *Faithful Companionship: How Pastoral Counseling Heals*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
Sperry, L. (2001). *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*. Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge.
Wise, C. (1983). *Pastoral Psychotherapy*. Northvale, NJ: J. Aronson.

Requirements (Note: All written assignments are to be submitted on CAMS)

- Participation in class discussion and integrating activities.
- **October 11: Critical book review.** Select from texts listed above.
- **Due as found in class schedule: Online interactive group discussions.**

Part I. You must use the CAMS site Forum for this assignment. On the Forum you will find a thread for **Questions for comments** for a class date. **Before the class period** (preferably the evening before class) you will enter either a **question** about the assigned reading for the class date or an **evaluative comment** about the reading assignment. **Dates that do not require a question or comment will be noted in bold, italics and underline in the syllabus.**

Part II. You will be assigned to an online discussion group. There are two expectations for this part.

- A.** On CAMS you will find a discussion thread for a date and your group number. Within 24 hours **after each class date listed** you will post a reflective comment in this thread about the class period, class discussion, class exercise, reading, or exercise. **Pay attention to your syllabus. There will be prompts for your reflective comments.** These should be critically evaluated comments that engage your ability to think critically about the material and its use. Comments should be no longer than 200 words. **Pay careful attention to dates both on CAMS and on the syllabus. This discussion is required for each listed date and not each class period.**
 - B.** Within 48 hours after **each class date listed**, read your group's posts. Write and post a critically reflective response to at least one other member's comments. **Preparation for class and participation**
- **November 1: Five page personal/theological essay.** In a 5 page essay, describe your personal and theological understanding of: a) why people and families have problems, b) how people change or solve their problems, and c) what part the counselor plays in this.
 - **Last day of finals: Case study.** Follow directions in "How to Write and Intake Evaluation and Case Study." Complete your case study with the following steps:
 - A.** Enlist volunteers to role-play one of the client problems described below.
 - B.** Conduct and videotape (or digitally record) a 30-50 minute counseling session with the client(s). The client will role play seeking help from you for the problem described in the description you choose. Note that your client must be free to improvise and develop this problem as fits them. It will be your job to be a good counselor for the client(s).
 - C.** At the end of the session, talk with your client. Ask them:
 - a. How well you "connected" with them.
 - b. How well you understood their "problem."
 - c. How you did with keeping conversation going using open ended questions, summaries, paraphrases, and your body language.
 - d. How well and appropriately were you able to respond to their concerns and any spiritual/religious dimensions to their concerns.
 - e. Did they feel the session was helpful?
 - f. Would they come back to see you after the first session?
 - g. **Write a brief summary of the feedback you received.**

- D.** After the session, review the videotape/digital recording. After watching yourself on the recording. **Write a critical analysis of what you did well, what you think you accomplished in the session, and what you would do differently for the next session.**
- E.** The final step of the case study is a case analysis. Write an assessment of the case. You will find “How to Write an Intake Evaluation and Case Study” helpful. Specifically:
- a.** What was the presenting problem (no more than three sentences)
 - b.** What is your assessment of the client’s present functioning (use tools presented in class)? Be sure to be clear and precise about what you see and how you evaluated it.
 - i.** Depression
 - ii.** Anxiety
 - iii.** Behavior problems
 - iv.** Addictions
 - v.** Relational problems
 - vi.** Serious mental health problems
 - vii.** Vocational problems
 - viii.** Etc.
 - c.** What is an appropriate goal for counseling? (One sentence: At the end of counseling the client will.... Limit yourself to one goal.)
 - d.** Make a case for what the next step should be. Treatment? Referral? Remember to keep your context in mind—parish counseling, agency counseling, etc.
- F.** Case study--what to turn in for a grade:
- a.** Your video recording
 - b.** Summary of what client’s feedback
 - c.** Your own written analysis of your work as observed on video
 - d.** Case analysis/assessment (no more than 5 pages)

Grade Weights

Online critical responses: 20%

Book review: 20%

Personal/theological essay: 20%

Case study: 40%

Grading rubrics are posted on CAMS/Intro to PC/Course Documents

Schedule

Sept. 8 No class

I: History and Contemporary Contexts

Sept. 13 *Defining Terms: Foundations of Pastoral Counseling in Christian history and 20th Century Clinical Ministry*

Reading:

- Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 1
Hunter, R. (2005). "Pastoral Care Movement," "Pastoral Counseling,"
"Pastoral Theology"

Class discussion:

- Definitions: Pastoral care, pastoral counseling, pastoral theology
- Historical review and analysis
- Pastoral Counseling as ministry and professional discipline

Sept. 15 *Critique: Cultural Captivity and Deconstruction of Power*

Reading:

- Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 2
Cozad-Neuger, C. (2004). "Power and Difference in Pastoral Theology," in
N.Ramsay (ed). *Pastoral Care and Counseling: Redefining the Paradigms*.
Nashville: Abingdon.
Lee, S. (2009). "Engaging Difference: Race and Ethnicity" (unpublished)

Class discussion:

- Critique--Euro-American, male history and formation
- Invisible contributions made visible
- Justice, social action, and pastoral counseling

Sept. 20 *Identity, Ministry, and Social Location: A Multiversal Vision*
First group online discussion due. See prompt below

Reading:

- Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 3
Graham, A. (2006). "Race and Ethnicity in the Formation of Pastoral Counselors," in D. Bidwell and J. Marshall (eds), *The Formation of Pastoral Counselors: Challenges and Opportunities*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
Lartey, E. (2002). "Pastoral Counselling in Multi-Cultural Contexts," in J. Farris (ed) *International Perspectives on Pastoral Counseling*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
Marshall, J. (2006). "Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, and Pastoral Formation," in D. Bidwell, and J. Marshall (eds), *The Formation of Pastoral Counselors: Challenges and Opportunities*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.

Prompt: What is your reaction to pastoral counseling's history and contemporary context? What gives you hope that pastoral counseling can make a difference? Where do you see yourself in this history and contemporary, multicultural situation? Are there religious/theological issues that are missing in your reading and discussion? To what else should we be paying attention?

II: Practices

Sept. 22 *Pastoral Counselors "Integrate" Behavioral Sciences and Theology*

Reading:

Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 4

Class discussion:

- Definitions—theology, spirituality, behavioral science, psychotherapy theory, "to integrate"
- Four approaches to integrating
- Pastoral Counseling, Christian Counseling, Biblical Counseling
- Psychotherapy theory and pastoral counseling

Sept. 27 *Pastoral Counselors Form Healing Relationships: Foundations in identity*

Reading:

Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 5

Cook, C. (2006). "Empathy: A Bridge Between Worlds, A Landscape of Care," *Family Ministry* 20:1 (Spring 2006), 29-38.

Schlauch, C. (1995). "The Pastoral Clinical Attitude," in Schlauch, C, *Faithful Companioning: How Pastoral Counseling Heals*. Minneapolis: Fortress (pp 76-103).

- Class discussion:
- Pastoral presence and empathy
- Forming therapeutic relationships
- Theory, relationship, and treatment outcome variables

Sept. 29 *Pastoral Counselors Form Healing Relationships: Forming Alliances*

Group online discussion due. See prompt below

No reading questions for this session

Practice session with vignettes and observers

- Pastoral presence and empathy
- Forming therapeutic relationships
- Theory, relationship, and treatment outcome variables

Prompt: What did you learn about empathy that you did not already know? How has the reading changed your perception about how counseling works? With what do you agree and disagree in the reading? What do you make of contemporary research about

what works in counseling? How does this affect your thinking about the work you will do?

Oct. 4 *Pastoral Counselors Develop and Use Psychotherapy Skills I*
No reading questions for this session

Reading: Prepare for coming weeks

Lecture & discussion:

- Basic counseling procedures
- Assessment and the clinical interview
- Basic assessment tools

Oct. 6 *Pastoral Counselors Develop and Use Psychotherapy Skills I (Continued)*
Group online discussion due. See prompt below
No reading questions for this session

Reading:
Download and review assessment tools on CAMS

Lecture & discussion

- Using assessment tools
- Interpreting assessment tools
- Bringing assessment tools into session
- Practice (if time)

Prompt: What have you learned about setting up a counseling context? Consider the importance of “starting right” with good observation and assessment. What critique do you have of meeting clients, assessing clients and starting the counseling process?

Oct. 11 *Special Concerns in Counseling: Suicide*

Reading:
Townsend, L. (2006). *Suicide: Pastoral Responses*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Lecture & discussion

- Context of self harm
- Assessing depression and other contributing factors
- Lethality assessment
- Intervention strategies
- Self harm and the church

Oct. 13 *Special Concerns (continued)*
No reading questions for this session
Assignment for Oct. 18 class: Download and use assessment tools with volunteers

Practice session with vignettes

- Use depression scales for screening
- Use lethality scale
- Conduct interview
- Group discussion of effectiveness

Oct 18 *Bringing it together—Assessment, goals and treatment plan*

No reading questions for this session

Group online discussion due. See prompt below

Reading:

“How to write an intake and case study”

Summarizing interview—key assessment procedure

Summarizing assessment tools

Forming coherent goals

Making decisions about treatment plan, referral, etc.

Record keeping

Prompt: Consider your reading about suicide as well as more general assessment and planning treatment. What is your reaction? What feels overwhelming or appropriate? How does your thinking about counseling change (whether parish or agency)?

Oct. 20 *Pastoral Counselors Are Aware of and Address Spiritual and Religious Issues I*

Reading:

Pergament, K. (2007). *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*. Chs. 1-4

Classroom: Be prepared to discuss reading in depth.

Oct. 25-27 Research and Reading

Nov. 1 *Pastoral Counselors Are Aware of and Address Spiritual and Religious Issues II*

Reading:

Pergament, K. (2007). Chs. 5-8

Classroom: Be prepared to discuss reading in depth.

Nov. 3 *Pastoral Counselors Use Spiritual and Pastoral Assessment Pastoral Assessment*

Group online discussion due. See prompt below

Reading:

Pergament, K. (2007). Chs. 9-11

Prompt: What have you learned from Pergament? How does his approach to spirituality intersect with your sense of counseling as ministry? What parts of his argument trouble you or inspire you. What do you make of his approach theologically?

Classroom: Be prepared to discuss reading in depth; examples of assessment tools.

Nov. 8 *Pastoral Counselors Integrate Religious and Spiritual Resources in Intervention*

Reading:

Pergament, K. (2007). *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*. Chs. 12-15

Classroom: Be prepared to discuss reading in depth.

Nov. 10 *Integrating Practice*
No reading questions this session

Practice Session with vignettes

Nov. 15 *Scripture and Ritual in Pastoral Counseling*

Reading:

Wimberly, E. (1994). *Using Scripture in Pastoral Counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon Press

Classroom:

Be prepared to discuss reading in depth.

Practice session if time allows

Nov. 17 *Prayer in Pastoral Counseling*
Group online discussion due. See prompt below

Reading:

Wimberly, E. (1990). *Prayer in Pastoral Counseling*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox.

Classroom:

- Integrating spirituality and religious language with integrity
- Attending to religious plurality
- Attending to client need
- Prayer, scripture and ritual
- Initiative—client and counselor
- Ethics and contextual sensitivity
- Practice session if time allows

Prompt: Consider prayer and scripture in pastoral counseling. What do you think will be your “rules” for the presence of prayer or scripture? What theological issues are at stake when considering prayer and scripture in counseling? What concerns do you have that were not discussed in class?

Nov. 22 *Practice session: Case presentation and analysis*
No reading questions this session.

No reading, practice session

Vignette or classroom demonstration

Nov. 24 Thanksgiving

Nov. 29 *Pastoral Counselors Reflect Theologically on their Work.*

Reading:

Townsend, L. (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 6

Townsend, L. (1996) Creative Theological Imagining: A Method for Pastoral Counseling, *Journal of Pastoral Care*, 50 (4).

Discussion and lecture

- Purpose of theological reflection
- Theological vs. spiritual reflection
- Theological reflection and context—in the workplace
- Theological reflection and guiding cases

Dec. 1 *Pastoral Counselors Reflect Theologically on their Work*

Group online discussion due. See prompt below

Reading:

Bohler, C. (1997). God is like a jazz band leader: location of divine and human power and responsibility—a call to pastoral theologians. *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 7, 23-42.

Neuger, C.C. (1996). Pastoral counseling as an art of personal political activism. In C. C. Neuger (Ed.). *The Arts of Ministry: Feminist and Womanist Approaches* (88-117). Louisville: John Knox Press.

Classroom: Theological reflection group experiment

Prompt: How have you experienced this business of theological reflection? How do you envision it as an important part of pastoral counseling? How do you think you would use it in practice?

Dec. 6 *Pastoral Counselors Think and Behave Ethically*

Reading:

Review Townsend, (2009). *Introduction*, Ch. 6 and Appendix A.

<https://aapc.org/content/ethics>

http://www.aamft.org/resources/lrm_plan/ethics/ethicscode2001.asp

Discussion:

- Ethical codes
- Principles and ethics
- Narrative ethics and pastoral counseling

Dec. 8

Last Things

No reading questions this session.

Discussion:

- Tying up last pieces
- Professional identity and place of practice
- Multiple frames of reference for “pastoral”
- Parish and agency

Other Important Policies

Grading: Grade Scale and Philosophy (Grading rubrics are posted on CAMS)

A	96.6-100
A-	93.6-96.5
B+	90.6-93.5
B	87.6-90.5
C	85.6-87.5
C+	83.6-85.5
C	81.6-83.5
C-	79.6-81.5
D	70.6-79.5
F	Below 70.6

Individuals admitted to graduate study are expected to perform consistently and well in academic work. This is translated into grades in the following way:

- Basic mastery of the body of knowledge at a level expected in graduate study will earn scores in the B to B+ range.
- Grades of A- are granted for work which demonstrates
--basic mastery of the body of knowledge, and
--independent thought about the subject matter.
- Grades of A are granted for work which demonstrates
--mastery of the required body of knowledge,
--independent thought about the subject matter, and
--creative/integrative use of the material, exceptional writing which integrates the material into a student's own system of thought, and/or exceptionally well done or articulate research.

Attendance

Learning is a complex activity that requires conceptual and experiential participation by those who wish to learn. Student attendance and participation is fundamental to the way the learning environment is structured for this course. Attendance and participation is required to earn a passing grade. While circumstances may require an adult learner to miss class occasionally, absence from more than 10% of the classroom experience will affect student learning and (consequently) the student's grade. Extreme circumstances, such as health problems, family concerns, etc. must be discussed with the professor **prior**

to multiple missed classes. **Students in practicum: Absence from class because you have a session scheduled for all or part of a class session is not an excused absence. These instances will be referred to the student's supervisor for follow-up.** Students unable to attend class regularly are advised to drop the class prior to the registrar's WP deadline, or receive a failing grade.

Form for Writing Assignments

- All papers submitted for grades must be written in APA approved style and be double-spaced.
- All papers are to be submitted electronically by uploading them to the appropriate assignment site on CAMS.
- All sources used in writing assignments must be cited appropriately and according to APA style. ***Failure to cite sources is plagiarism. You must give credit for quotes and ideas used in your writing. Papers submitted for grades that demonstrate plagiarism will receive a failing grade, and students will be subject to the seminary policy regarding plagiarism.***

Late assignments

Late assignments will lose ½ grade point per day without prior arrangement with professor. Papers are due by midnight (e-mail) on the assigned day.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will result in class failure and referral to the Dean of the Seminary for disciplinary action. All use of another's material ***must*** be documented and appropriately cited.

Incompletes

Incompletes will be granted only for serious personal or family illness or crises and must be negotiated prior to the last day of classes.

Inclusive language is a seminary policy

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse has been traditionally patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial inclusiveness.