PSY570 Couples Counseling

Reformed Theological Seminary – Orlando
Tuesday and Wednesday, May 30-31, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Wednesday, June 11-13, 21-23, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
3 credit hours
Summer Semester, 2007
Instructor: Scott Coupland, Ph.D
Office Hours: By appointment
Telephone: (407) 366-9493, ext. 238

PURPOSE
To examine the nature and proper functioning of marriage, gender issues in marriage, common
couple patterns, marital, and premarital/remarital and marital counseling strategies designed to
promote harmony and instill hope.

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS
1. The student will build a biblical pattern of marriage that is translatable into the identification
and correction of couple problems.
2. The student will become familiar with common marital problem patterns.
3. The student will gain an understanding of various approaches to pre-marital and marital
counseling.
4. The student will develop categories for the assessment and treatment of problems in
marriage.
5. The student will learn strategies for counseling couples, and for addressing specific couple’s
issues (e.g., separation and divorce, infidelity, violence).

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND READINGS
Donovan, *Short-term object relations couples therapy* (pp. 1-36). New York: Brunner-
Routledge.
E. Wiffen (Eds.), *Attachment processes in couple and family therapy* (pp.103-123). New
York: Guilford.
way of wisdom: Essays in honor of Bruce K. Waltke* (pp. 280-296). Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan.
*Schachner, D. A, Shaver, P. R., & Milkulincer, M. (2003). Adult attachment theory,
psychodynamics, and couple relationships. In S. M. Johnson & V. E. Wiffen (Eds.),
*Attachment processes in couple and family therapy* (pp.18-42). New York: Guilford.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK AND READING
attachment and couple psychotherapy* (pp. 15-27). East Sussex, England: Brunner-
Routledge. (Pages 21-24 provide a good summary of the attachment patterns.)
*Available on reserve in the library.*

**SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>Foundations of marriage</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 12-13</td>
<td>Gender issues</td>
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<td>June 21</td>
<td>Couple patterns</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>Premarital and remarital counseling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Approaches to couples counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 23</td>
<td>Approaches to couples counseling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special issues in couples counseling: separation, divorce and remarriage, infidelity, violence</td>
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**REQUIREMENTS**

1. Read assigned text and supplementary articles/chapters.
2. Premarital and remarital counseling program handbook. You will prepare a six session premarital program with the purpose that you can use in premarital counseling.
   A. Make a decision on:
      a. The setting: private counseling practice or a church.
      b. The format of the program: couples counseling, group counseling, or a combination of both, and the use of mentors.
   B. The program must consist of:
      a. An introductory letter and contract. This letter is given to prospective couples for premarital/remarital counseling to introduce them to yourself and/or church and the premarital/remarital counseling you offer. (See *The Premarital Counseling Handbook* by H. Norman Wright, pp. 27-30 for samples. This letter/contract should minimally include:
         i. An introduction of yourself and, if applicable, the church.
         ii. A statement about your personal belief in the sanctity of marriage.
         iii. A statement about the purpose of premarital/remarital counseling.
         iv. A statement about the time, energy, and commitment involved in premarital/remarital counseling.
         v. Your expectations of the couple’s commitment to the premarital/remarital counseling process.
         vi. An explanation of the premarital/remarital counseling process.
            - The format of the sessions
            - The number and length of sessions, and the time frame for completing the program.
            - A brief outline of what will be covered during each session
      vii. Any required reading or other resources
      viii. Testing procedures (if applicable)
      ix. Costs for sessions, testing (if applicable), and supplies
x. The wedding policy (in church-based setting)

xi. A sexual purity statement/contract

b. Six unique sessions. It is your choice as to what topics you cover in the six sessions. You may NOT use one particular premarital workbook as your program or the sole source of your materials. I want you to draw material from various resources, including your own ideas, and integrate them. There is a collection of premarital workbooks on reserve in the library to help you.

Each session should be a separate section that addresses unique questions and issues. For each session include:

i. List in-session discussion topics, homework review, and specific questions asked by the counselor (this the counselor’s outline and is not given to the couple, so put it on a separate page).

ii. An outline of the material covered in that session.

iii. Homework to be completed for the next session. The homework questions need to be typed out, NOT copied from published workbooks. Include introductory material for the topic(s), and instructions for completing the homework. Below each question should be sufficient room for a written response. There should be general questions for the topics, and then additional questions relevant to divorce and remarriage. There is a collection of premarital workbooks on reserve in the library to help you.

iv. Required reading for the next session, if applicable.

v. List any assessments (e.g., PREPARE, TJTA, Myers Briggs) and time for feedback, if applicable.

c. Format: Use a binder for your handbook, and labeled tabbed pages to separate the sections. Include a table of contents with page numbers. Font style and size is your choice, as long as it is readable.

Due Wednesday, July 18, 2007 by 5:00 p.m. in Jan Brubaker’s office.

2. In class final examination. At the end of the last day of class, a series of movie and video clips will be shown. Students will respond to a multiple choice question or set of questions for each clip. The questions will assess the student’s ability to apply the material regarding gender issues, couple patterns, attachment styles, and counseling techniques to “live” scenarios.

GRADING
Reading: 20 points
Premarital/remarital counseling program handbook: 100 points
Final exam: 80 points
Total possible points: 200 points
Course grades will be determined by adding points from the percentage of assigned reading completed, the premarital/remarital counseling program handbook, and the final examination. Grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 194-200 points  C+ = 166-171 points  
A- = 188-193 points  C = 160-165 points  
B+ = 182-187 points  C- = 156-159 points  
B = 176-181 points  D = 140-155 points  
B- = 172-175 points  F = 139 points and below

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS**
Classroom attendance and participation are required at all class sessions.

The handbook assignment must be submitted by the deadline. For each day the assignment is late, 5 points will be deducted from the score of the assignment. Extensions may be granted by the professor and only after approval by the academic dean. Extensions will be granted only for causes deemed adequate, and a written request is required.

Plagiarism/cheating will result in the failure of the course.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Christian Couples Counseling


Secular Couples Counseling


**Premarital and Remarital Couples Counseling**

**Workbooks**


**Finances**


**Marriage**


Sex


Men and Women


Couples Counseling, Summer 2007

Name:____________________________________

Required reading:


I read _____________% of this book.


I read _____________% of this chapter.


I read _____________% of this chapter.


I read _____________% of this chapter.


I read _____________% of this chapter.

Due July 18, 2007 by 5:00 p.m. in Scott Coupland’s mailbox or sent to him via email.
The couple has always found ways to please and help each other, a practice they have kept over the years. A good marriage is characterized by husband and wife’s delight in a give and take relationship. There is mutual respect for each other. In a good marriage, the man and wife are both happy in their decision to be with each other for the rest of their lives. That commitment is reaffirmed time and again despite difficulties and trials. In a good marriage, there is laughter and conversation. The classic marital values of love, trust, and becoming one with your partner in a bond of love are distorted by intense emotion. The appropriately named Mr. Pinchwife is a jealous husband who moves Ana keeps a list of things that need to be done and does them in an organized and timely manner. A marriage contract is a legal agreement between two people who are planning to get married. Often, a marriage contract is used in determining which spouse will retain property and other assets in the event that the marriage ends. This is not always the case, however. Some marriage contracts also include the commitment the spouses in a marriage make to each other and conditions of the marriage. Sometimes these contracts also cover the details of how children who were born before the marriage will be cared for in the event that the marriage ends. Some couples agree to a prenuptial contract because marriage is becoming outdated because not everybody in society is allowed to access it. K Newton, UK. I am very sad to see so many anti-marriage comments and so much negativity regarding the whole subject. The problem is that the political establishment cannot keep up with this pace of change. The institution of marriage is as accepted as an institution as the divorce rates show. However, once children come into the picture, the whole scene changes. At this point, the responsibilities become greater than just two people enjoying a mutual convenience - they now have to provide a secure and nurturing environment to raise their children, and society still accepts marriage as the only practical means to accomplish that.