

Syllabus for  
**GCSL 676—Marriage Counseling**  
3 Credit Hours  
Spring 2016

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

An overview of recent research findings in the area of couple relationships and an introduction to empirically supported models for marriage counseling. Emphasizes prevention and wellness.  
Prerequisites: None.

II. COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to do the following:

- A. Present the essential components of an effective premarital counseling process. (MCFC, D.1)
- B. Review recent research findings related to couple's relationships, with an emphasis on both the characteristics of healthy relationships and the precursors of divorce. (MCFC, D.1; J.2,3)
- C. Describe various empirically supported treatments for couple's counseling, e.g. The Gottman Method, Emotionally Focused Marital Therapy, Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling. (MCFC, A.5; I.3)
- D. Address the issue of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in terms of description, assessment and treatment. (MCFC, C.2)
- E. Discuss common sexual dysfunctions and their treatments. (MCFC, C.3)
- F. Reflect theologically on various controversial marital issues, e.g. divorce and remarriage, same-sex marriage, interracial marriage, God's will in mate selection, marital structure.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Elucidate the basic components of an effective premarital counseling process. (class project)
- B. Explain the significance of recent research findings on the process of couple's counseling. (exam)
- C. Conceptualize how various empirically supported treatments seek to treat couples in counseling. (exam)
- D. Understand the cycle of domestic violence along with approaches to assessment and treatment. (exam)
- E. Describe common sexual dysfunctions and their treatments. (book presentations)
- F. Engage in theological reflection and take a reasoned position on a controversial marital issue. (research paper)

#### IV. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

##### A. Required Materials

###### 1. Textbooks

Gottman, J. M. *The Science of Trust: Emotional Attunement for Couples*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2011. ISBN: 9780393705959

Ripley, J. S. and Worthington, E. L. (2014). *Couple therapy: A new hope-focused approach*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP. ISBN: 9780830828579

Stanley, S., D. Trathen, S. McCain, and M. Bryan. *A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002. ISBN: 9780787939830

###### 2. Other None

##### B. Optional Materials

###### 1. Textbooks

Gottman, J. M. *The Marriage Clinic: A Scientifically Based Marital Therapy*. New York: Norton, 1999. ISBN: 9780393702828

Worthington, E. L. *Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: A Guide to Brief Therapy*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005. ISBN: 9780830827640

###### 2. Other None

#### V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

##### A. University Policies and Procedures

1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University. Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.
2. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence are charged a late exam fee.
3. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: "I will not cheat or plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments." Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one's own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - a. Submitting another's work as one's own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;
  - b. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
  - c. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
  - d. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;
  - e. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.

By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or failing the course or expulsion from the University, as determined by department and University guidelines.

4. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.
5. Students are to be in compliance with university, school, and departmental policies regarding Whole Person Assessment requirements. Students should consult the WPA handbooks for requirements regarding general education and the students' majors.
  - a. The penalty for not submitting electronically or for incorrectly submitting an ePortfolio artifact is a zero for that assignment.
  - b. By submitting an assignment, the student gives permission for the assignment to be assessed electronically.

B. Graduate School of Theology and Ministry Policies and Procedures

1. **Completion of Assignments**

Assignments are due on the dates established in the course calendar, which is published in the syllabus. **Any assignments turned in after the scheduled due date are penalized five percent (5%) of the original value per day including weekends, breaks, and holidays.** All work turned in two weeks after the assignment deadline is received but is granted a grade of zero for that assignment. **No work** is accepted after the final date of regular classes.

2. **Incompletes**

- a. An incomplete is given only after the student establishes with the academic committee by written petition that student's work is incomplete for good cause (i.e., lengthy illness, death in the family). **Incompletes are rarely granted.** Only those absences that are incurred within the time period of the extenuating circumstances prompting an incomplete are excused. The student is still accountable for any other absences and will be penalized for them according to the attendance policy.
- b. A Petition for Incomplete Grade with all supporting documentation must be submitted for approval one week prior to the end of normal classes. **The submitting of a petition does not automatically ensure the granting of an incomplete.** The petition must be approved by the academic committee of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry. Students are expected to continue all course work until an incomplete is granted.

3. **Examinations**

- a. Early examinations **are not** allowed. Late examinations without grade penalty are administered only when extenuating circumstances are present (such as a death in the family the week before exams or a sudden and major illness the week of exams that is documented by a physician).
- b. A Petition for Late Examination must be submitted to the academic dean's office. A **\$15 fee**, plus proper documentation, must accompany the petition. The academic committee reviews each petition and grade penalties are assessed. (Late exam fee is not a grade penalty.)
- c. Students taking late exams should expect alternate versions of the original exams.
- d. **Not being present for the final examination automatically results in failure of the course.**

4. **Attendance**

The administration and faculty of the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry believe that class attendance is crucial in order for students to receive impartation, spiritual formation, and a community experience. Therefore, the Official Attendance Policy for the GSTM is as follows:

- a. Students will receive one letter grade reduction after missing more than two weeks of classes.
- b. Students who miss more than one month of classes will fail the course.
- c. **The absences allowed prior to a grade reduction are designed to allow for emergencies and illnesses and are not designed for indiscriminate use.**
- d. Administrative excuses are granted only when a student is on official university business and has received approval in advance from the university administration.
- e. Students are expected to be prompt for classes.
- f. Students are expected to remain for the entire class session.
- g. Leaving early without permission constitutes an absence.

5. The Disability Service Center, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, assures that no qualified individual with a disability will be denied reasonable accommodations based upon the individual's needs. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Disability Service Center and properly register for these services. For more information, call 918.495.7018 or go to [www.studentresources.oru.edu](http://www.studentresources.oru.edu).

C. Course Policies and Procedures

1. Evaluation Procedures

a. Grading:

Two exams (100 points each)	200 points
One book presentation (50 points each)	50 points
A Theology of Marriage position paper	<u>100 points</u>
Total	350 points

b. Grading scale:

A=315-350 pts.  
B=280-314 pts.  
C=245-279 pts.  
D=210-244 pts.  
F=Below 210 pts.

2. Whole Person Assessment Requirements

- a. All students entering the seminary are required to enroll in PRF 059—ePortfolio: Whole Person Assessment, which provides specific training to develop the skills needed to create an ePortfolio.
- b. WPA requirements for this course:  
None

3. Other Policies and/or Procedures

a. Theology of marriage position paper

- (1) Students select one controversial issue regarding marriage and write a theological position paper expressing their personal stance on that issue.
- (2) The paper should reflect a respectful understanding of the different positions on the issue and should offer a clear rationale for the stance taken.
- (3) The paper should be 8-10 pages in length.

- (4) Students should cite a minimum of 10 academic sources, of which half (5) should be theological in nature.
- (5) The paper should be in APA format for counseling students.
- (6) Examples of controversial issues:
  - (a) Marital/Family Structure
  - (b) Same-Sex Marriages
  - (c) God's Will in Mate Selection
  - (d) Sexual Expression in/before Marriage
  - (e) Blended Families
  - (f) Interracial Families
  - (g) Theological Metaphors of Marriage (e.g., covenant)
  - (h) Divorce and Remarriage
- (7) The paper is worth 100 points, which are allotted as follows:
  - (a) Content: 80 points
  - (b) Form and Style: 20 points
- b. Book presentation
  - (1) Select any self-help book on sexuality and present a 5- to 10-minute summary and critique of its content to the class.
  - (2) Make an outline of the presentation available to the class.
  - (3) Purpose:
    - (a) To increase the student's awareness of the available material on sexuality
    - (b) To emphasize an important aspect of marriage counseling that is currently not addressed in a regularly offered class
    - (c) To assist students in becoming more comfortable in discussing this vital area of relationships
  - (4) This presentation is worth 50 points.

## VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Day	Topic	Reading
1	Introduction to Marriage Counseling	
2	Video: 7 Principles for Making Marriage	
3	Myths and Mistakes of Marital Therapy	Gottman, Ch. 1
4	Repair and the Core Triad of Balance	Gottman, Ch. 2
5	The Sound Marital House	Gottman, Ch. 3
6	The Assessment of Marriage	Gottman, Chs. 4-5
7	<b>Marital Issue Position Paper Due</b>	
	Assumptions and Intervention Overview	Gottman, Chs. 6-9
8	Emotion-Focused Therapy	
9	Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling: Theory	Worthington, Chs. 1-4, 16
10	<b>Take-Home Gottman Exam Due</b>	
	Precounseling and Assessment Interventions	Worthington, Chs. 5-6
11	Interventions for Drawing on Central Values	Worthington, Ch. 7

<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
12	Interventions for Revisioning a Core Vision	Worthington, Ch. 8
	Promoting Confession and Forgiveness	Worthington, Ch. 9
13	Interventions for Strengthening Communication	Worthington, Ch. 10
	Interventions for Aiding in Conflict Resolution	Worthington, Ch. 11
14	Interventions for Changing Cognition	Worthington, Ch. 12
15	Interventions for Stimulating More Closeness	Worthington, Ch. 13
	Interventions for Cementing Commitment	Worthington, Ch. 14
	<b>Final Exam</b> (university schedule)	

**Inventory for Student Learning Outcomes  
Graduate School of Theology and Ministry  
M. A. Christian Counseling**

**GCSL 676—Marriage Counseling**

**Dr. Bill Buker, Instructor**

**Spring 2016**

This course contributes to student learning outcomes for the M.A. Christian Counseling degree as indicated below:

**Significant Contribution** – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

**Moderate Contribution** – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

**Minimal Contribution** – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

**No Contribution** – Does not address the outcome.

Degree Program Outcomes	Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution	No Contribution
<b>Theology/Philosophy of Counseling</b>				
Develop a cohesive theology of counseling with theological reflection on the counseling process, emphasizing Spirit-directed change.	X			
<b>Assessment Techniques</b>				
Exhibit skill in selecting, administering, scoring, interpreting, and reporting the results from various assessment instruments.			X	
<b>Clinical/Theoretical Diagnostic Appraisal</b>				
Demonstrate the ability to interpret case specific information by translating it into accurate diagnostic appraisals.		X		
<b>Treatment Plans in Response to Diagnosis</b>				
Display the ability to develop relevant treatment plans in response to specific diagnoses, and the skill to implement them in the context of a therapeutic relationship.		X		
<b>Research Skills and Methodologies</b>				
Demonstrate basic research skills and methodologies through critiquing research findings and evaluating ESTs.		X		
<b>Professional Code of Ethics</b>				
Demonstrate knowledge of professional codes of ethics and the ability to apply those codes to ethical dilemmas.			X	