PURPOSE:

This course focuses on understanding diverse clients from different theoretical perspectives and utilizing various strategies and techniques to help bring about change with those in our care. An overarching goal of the course is to foster the development of attitudes and knowledge necessary to become a reflective practitioner serving a pluralistic and postmodern society. Our theoretical (and personal) assumptions about people and their motives influence how we see the strengths and weaknesses of our clients, the style of therapeutic relationship we develop, the kind of therapeutic goals we set, how we attempt to intervene to meet these goals, and how we evaluate this process. As a result, it is especially important to develop a strong, useful theoretical viewpoint -- both for your own work as well as to understand the work of other practitioners.

Furthermore, this course is designed to help you begin thinking about specific approaches to treating a variety of clients. The field of pastoral care and counseling is rapidly moving toward a theory of differential treatment. Rather than determining what is the best theory of counseling and psychotherapy, we are increasingly focusing on what treatment, applied by whom, is most effective for this individual, couple, or family with this particular presenting issue(s) and specific set of circumstances. As a result we must learn a variety of treatment modalities, some of which may be less familiar to us though no less important. We must also learn to hear and respect a multiplicity of worldviews, even those that differ significantly from our own.

OBJECTIVES:

1) Knowledge of and the capacity to evaluate a variety of counseling theories and intervention strategies based on these theories;
2) The ability to make a transition between knowledge and information to the learning process of becoming an effective pastoral caregiver;
3) The ability to apply theoretical approaches to selected case studies and simulated counseling interventions;
4) An awareness of personal strengths and limitations in applying theories to specific pastoral care and counseling situations;
5) The development of a theoretical foundation informing one’s approach to pastoral care and counseling;
6) Sensitivity to the needs of special populations, as well as familiarity with ethical and professional issues in therapeutic interventions;

7) An understanding of how to apply the major foundational ideas in counseling, including the skills of empathy, listening, and attending;
8) The ability to think divergently about a single phenomenon and to consider multiple explanations for a person's behavior;
9) Explore social context by addressing issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, culture, class, and physical ability;
10) Describe and understand the major counseling "languages," applying the concepts of various theories to self and those in our care.

REQUIRED READINGS:


ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Self-motivation** and **self-discipline** will be very important components of this online distance learning course, manifested in timely engagement with all assignments: audio presentations, PowerPoint slides, required readings, discussion forums, film clips, case studies, and written assignments. If you have questions and/or concerns at anytime during the semester, please do not hesitate to contact me by email and/or cell phone.

   2. Each week in the **Discussion Board** of the Blackboard web site, students will be posting **weekly reflections** on selected topics. Your reflections may take the form of a

      (a) **Question:** As you reflect on the topic, does a question come to mind? Something that is provocative and/or confusing? Something that needs clarification?
      (b) **Comment on the Content:** Apply a portion of the course material to the topic in order to assess its relevance. What makes the material persuasive/not persuasive?
      (c) **Subjective Reaction:** What was your emotional, spiritual, and/or visceral experience of the course material? Did it evoke a positive/negative experience? Please note: 150-250 words.

   3. Each week students will submit online **responses** to the postings of other students. Each response will be 75-100 words, and will consist of thoughtful and constructive feedback, pro and con. **PLEASE NOTE:** Timely responses **each week** are expected in the discussion forums. Tardiness in posting responses will substantially lower one’s grade for the course, so please plan accordingly.
4. There will be **four quizzes** that will focus on the various theories of counseling presented in the four modules. The quizzes, which will be helpful preparation for students planning to take the Mental Health Counseling licensure exam, will consist of fill-in-the-blank responses and short written answers.

5. A **final paper** (No more than 10 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) that articulates your theoretical framework as a caregiver and applies this framework to the case of someone in your care. For example, what theories of counseling have and/or will inform your work as a pastoral practitioner? What are the strengths AND weaknesses of these theories? Finally, how do the theories you selected inform your work and interventions with your client or congregant. Please note that students are expected to articulate a differential theoretical framework, i.e. “eclectic”, that reflects the value of multiple explanations of human behavior and personality.

**SCHEDULE:**

**Module 1: Depth Psychology and a Focus on Past/Present Experience**
- **June 22:** Introduction to the Course  
  Nothing More Practical than a Good Theory  
  Psychoanalysis & Psychoanalytic Theories  
  *Gladding: Chapters 1 & 2*
- **June 29:** Adlerian Therapy & Existential Therapy  
  Carl Rogers & Person-Centered Therapy  
  *Gladding: Chapters 3-5*

**Module 2: The Cognitive Revolution**
- **July 6:** Gestalt Therapy & Reality Therapy  
  A Word about Jungian Therapy  
  *Gladding: Chapters 6-7*
- **July 13:** Behavioral Therapy, Cognitive Therapy, & REBT  
  *Gladding: 8-10*

**Module 3: The Turn Toward Family Systems**
- **July 20:** Transactional Analysis, Feminist Therapy, & Solution-Focused Therapy  
  *Gladding: Chapters 11, 12, & 15*
July 27: Bowenian Family Systems Therapy & Strategic Family Therapy
Ethical & Legal Aspects of Counseling
Gladding: Chapters 13, 14, & 16

Module 4: Systems Theory Applied to Congregational “Families”

August 3: Family Systems Theory Applied to Faith Communities
Friedman: Chapters 1-6

August 10: Families Within and the Congregation as Family
The Personal Families of Caregivers
Friedman: Chapters 7-12

EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated based on evidence of mastery at three levels of performance: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. The three levels of mastery will correspond, respectively, to letter grades of B-/B, B+/A-, and A.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

It is assumed that all students are familiar with the Graduate School of Religion & Religious Education’s policy on academic integrity. Any instances of academic dishonesty cannot be tolerated and will be brought to the attention of the dean and associate dean. Plagiarism of any kind, including quotations from the Internet without supplying proper bibliographic data, is unacceptable, as is working collaboratively on written assignments (papers, exams, etc.). Note: When in doubt about issues of plagiarism, please contact me first with your questions before submitting any written work.