PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to help students expand their awareness and experience of culture in the context of a postmodern and pluralistic world, and to begin applying this knowledge to the disciplines of pastoral care and counseling, mental health counseling, and pastoral ministry. Traditional foundations of mental health counseling will be explored to assess their applicability and/or inapplicability to contexts of cultural and ethnic diversity. Emphasis will be placed on the role of social location, culture, environment, history, race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, education, religious and spiritual orientation, and socioeconomic status as factors that greatly impact the lives of clients and parishioners. Attention will be given to working with clients from specific cultural and ethnic groups and the presenting issues unique to the particular groups or populations. At the same time, it is important to remember that in acquiring multicultural competencies, practitioners must guard against overgeneralizations and stereotypes, since cultural or ethnic populations are complex and dynamic.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a greater awareness of one’s own cultural, psychological, and theological assumptions and presuppositions.
2. Examine one’s own cultural heritage in order to determine how it might be a resource and an obstacle in working with clients and parishioners.
3. Develop a thoroughgoing hermeneutic of suspicion vis-à-vis the “texts” of self, culture, psychology, counseling, theology and religion.
4. Acquire a thorough understanding of the foundations of mental health counseling, and their applicability and/or inapplicability to working with culturally and ethnically diverse clients.
5. Acquire a method for critiquing standard psychotherapeutic modalities vis-à-vis the work of multicultural counseling.
6. Identify and address our own values, biases, and assumptions about culture, race, ethnicity, human behavior, and the myriad forms of religious faith and spirituality.
7. Develop a greater understanding and experience of the worldviews of culturally diverse groups and clients.
8. Develop a greater understanding of the social and cultural foundations of psychology, psychotherapy, and pastoral care and counseling.
9. Identify the unique challenges and opportunities of practicing pastoral care and counseling and psychotherapy in a pluralistic and postmodern world.
10. Develop multicultural competencies and intervention skills with culturally diverse clients and parishioners.
11. Acquire a greater knowledge of the field of multicultural counseling, paying close attention to the specific issues and nuances of a particular cultural and ethnic group or population.
12. Develop a greater understanding of how organizational, systemic, institutional, political, social, and religious forces impact the development of multicultural counseling.
13. Identify and examine one’s own theology of pluralism and multiculturalism, both in terms of a professed, systematic theology (e.g., “Every client or parishioner is a beloved child of God”) and a more unconscious operational theology (e.g., “God helps and rewards those who help themselves”).

REQUIRED READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READING:


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. The reflections will be in the form of a comment, question, or subjective reaction. For example, does a question come to mind as you reflect on the discussion topic? Is something confusing or enlightening or provocative? Is there a persuasiveness to the argument? Does the material evoke a more visceral response? Why? 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. Remember to respond to different students each week. 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. A Mid-Term Exam on the foundations of mental health counseling, covered in the audio presentations, PowerPoint slides, and Gerig reading (required of all pastoral counseling students). The exam will include definitions, short answers, and multiple choice. Religious education and spirituality students may choose to take the exam or write a Multicultural Self-Assessment (8-pages, double-spaced). The self-assessment will focus, objectively and candidly, on specific strengths, areas of growth, and plans for addressing particular deficits. For example, what cultural and ethnic groups are you most comfortable working with? Least comfortable? Why? How does your own cultural heritage, personality, relating style, and personal theology and spirituality impact your work with culturally-diverse clients or parishioners? How does your multicultural self-assessment inform your professional and vocational discernment?

5. A Final Examination on multicultural competencies and counseling culturally-diverse clients. Part I of the exam will focus on multicultural terms and definitions. Part II will focus on case studies that address issues specific to particular ethnic and cultural groups. Required of all students.

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.

TECHNOLOGY HELP:

For technical support with the Blackboard course management system, you will need to email helpit@fordham.edu or call 718.817.3999.

SCHEDULE:

Module One: Foundations Of Mental Health & Multicultural Counseling

Week 1

Introduction to the Course
Read Syllabus and Student Handbook for Online Courses
What Is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor?
Multicultural Terms and Definitions
Gerig: Chapter 1; Lee: Chapters 1 & 2

**Week 2**

Historical & Theoretical Foundations of Counseling  
Understanding and Appreciating Differences  
Culture Shock and Cultural Transition  
Gerig: Chapters 2-3; Lee: Chapters 3-6

Module Two: The Practice Of Mental Health & Multicultural Counseling

Traditional and Contemporary Theories of Counseling  
Counseling Native Americans  
Gerig: Chapter 4; Lee: Chapter 7  
Film Clip: *Smoke Signals*

**Week 3**

Education, Licensure, Certification, and Employment Settings  
Counseling African Americans  
Gerig: Chapter 5 & 6; Lee: Chapter 8  
Film Clip: *Get on the Bus*

Appraisal and Research in Counseling  
Counseling Latino/a Americans  
Gerig: Chapter 7; Lee: Chapter 9  
Film Clip: *Maria Full of Grace*

**Week 4**

Mental Health Counseling and Multiculturalism  
Counseling Asian Americans  
Gerig: Chapter 8; Lee: Chapter 10  
Film Clip: *Bend It Like Beckham*

Module Three: Contemporary Issues In Mental Health & Multicultural Counseling

Ethical and Legal Issues; Managed Care and Third-Party Reimbursement  
Counseling Euro-Americans  
Gerig: Chapter 9 & 10; Lee: Chapter 11  
Film Clip: *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*

**Week 5**

The Future of Mental Health Counseling  
Counseling Women & Men; The Impact of Gender  
Gerig: Chapter 11 & 12; Lee: Chapters 13 & 14
Preparation for Mid-Term Exam

Module Four: Social & Cultural Foundations of Pastoral Care & Counseling

Week 6
Narrative Agency, Systemic Thinking, and Intercultural Realities
Counseling Gay Men and Lesbian Women
Smith/Riedel-Pfaefflin: Chapters 1-4; Lee: Chapter 15
Film Clip: Kissing Jessica Stein

Week 7
Invisible Social Forces; Gender and Culture; Forgiveness
Counseling Older Adults
Counseling Persons with Disabilities and Middle-Eastern Americans
Smith/Riedel-Pfaefflin: Chapters 5-9; Lee: Chapter 12, 16-17
A Collision of Cultures
Fadiman: The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

Week 8
Final Exam