PCGR 6440 - Pastoral Counseling Skills
Fall 2015

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Office hours: Tuesdays 5:00 - 6:45 and Wednesdays by appointment

NOTE: THIS IS A “WORKING” SYLLABUS. THIS MEANS THAT SOME ELEMENTS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE CLASS BEGINS, BASED ON STUDENT NEEDS. HOWEVER, THE REQUIRED TEXT WILL NOT CHANGE.

Course Description
This course will acquaint students with the basic skills required in the helping professions, including counseling, ministry, spiritual direction, and education. Students will engage with the theory of helping and the stages of exploration, insight, and action through lecture, discussion, and multi-platform media. The practicum aspect of the course consists of actual counseling practice in small groups, closely supervised by the instructor, in which students will alternate roles of counselor, client, and observer. You will cultivate the practices of self-awareness and self-assessment, as well as develop skills in constructive peer evaluation.

Learning Objectives:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1) Describe and reflect upon the stages of helping (exploration, insight, and action).
2) Identify and analyze different types of interventions that can be used in a helping session
3) Demonstrate mastery of the basic skills of the helping professional, including active listening, building trust, appropriate physical presence, restatement, reflection of feelings, interpretation, motivation, etc.
4) Critically assess their own and others’ counseling skills sensitively and constructively.

Required Text:

Please be sure to purchase the FOURTH edition. This is the only required text. Other readings will be posted on Blackboard as noted.
Course Requirements/Assignments:

1) Thorough preparation and active participation in class (20%). You will be expected to read all assignments thoroughly, to come to class prepared, and to participate constructively in class discussion.

2) Weekly journal (25%). Students will submit a weekly journal entry in Blackboard. Each journal entry consists of two parts: a) A summary and reflection of the week’s reading assignment and b) a reflection on the previous week’s experience in the counseling triad.

3) Counseling triad work (30%). Each week, students will practice counseling in triad groups. You will alternate among the roles of helper, client, and observer. Evaluation of your work in the triads is based on your willingness and openness to supervision, your constructive feedback to others, and your developing helping skills.

4) Final Paper (25%) on the topic of your development as a helping professional. We will discuss this at length in class.

Schedule of Topics:

Unit I (2 weeks): Introduction to helping
Unit II: (4 weeks): Exploration
Unit III (3 weeks): Insight
Unit IV (3 weeks): Action
Unit V (3 weeks): Integration

A complete schedule of readings and topics for each unit will be distributed on the first day of class.