

BRIERCREST

CM 620 Pastoral Counselling

Fall 2026

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Course Dates: November 2-6, 2026

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will offer biblical perspectives and foundational theory and practice for pastoral care and counselling. Topics include understanding the fundamentals of the therapeutic process including basic interviewing skills, preliminary assessment, referral options, and documentation. Emphasis will be placed on ethical practice, confidentiality, and circle of care.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course is intended to orient and to prepare persons in ministry for the work of shepherding in the church. A large proportion of people seeking help still turn first to pastors. The church's ministry of making disciples has included the work of pastoral care from the very beginning. This course is intended to provide a theological and biblical basis for the work of pastoral care, a review of counselling skills required for this task, and a consideration of how the local church participates in the care of its people.

Required Reading:

Benner, David G. (1998). *Care of souls: Revisioning Christian nurture and counsel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. ISBN:0-85364-960-X

Clinebell, Howard J. (2011) *Basic types of pastoral counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing and growth, Third edition*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon. ISBN: 978-0-687-66380-4

Hauerwas, Stanley (2022) Being with the wounded: Pastoral care within the life of the church. <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/wounded-pastoral-care-within-the-life-of-the-church/10708802>

Kollar, Charles A. (2011) *Solution-focused pastoral counseling: An effective short-term approach for getting people back on track*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. ISBN: 9780310329299

- Liens, C. J. K. (2021) What makes pastoral counseling so pastoral? Distinguishing between pastoral care and clinical practice in modern life. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 40, 4, 257-364.
- Sanders, R. K., Ed., (2013) *Christian counseling ethics: A handbook for psychologists, therapists and pastors*, Downers Grove, IL: IVP:
Ch. 14. Pastors who counsel by B. Blackburn
Ch. 15. Lay counselor training by S.-Y. Tan
- Wimberley, Edward P. (1994) *Using scripture in pastoral counseling*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon. ISBN: 0-687-00251-6

OTHER RECOMMENDED READING

- Augsburger, David (1986) *Pastoral Counseling across Cultures*
- Benner, David G. (2003) *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model*
- Berg, Sam (2023) *Healing disquiet: An integrative model for relational therapy*. Mossbank, SK: Living Water Press.
- Crabb, Larry (2007) *Becoming a true spiritual community: A profound vision of what the church can be*. Thomas Nelson.
- Kraft, Charles H. (2012) *I give you authority: Practicing the authority Jesus gave us*.
- Shumbamhini, Mercy (2025) Healing narratives: A journey of transformation and renewal. *International Journal of Narrative Therapy and Community Work*, Number One.
- Thomas, Frank, and Cockburn, Jack (1998) *Competency-based counseling: Building on client strengths*. In Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series, Howard Stone, editor.
- Van Deusen Hunsinger, Deborah (1995) *Theology and pastoral counseling: A new interdisciplinary approach*. Eerdmans.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here:

<https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/currentstudents/documents>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.

2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. Thinking

- An understanding of the biblical and theological foundations of pastoral care in the local church.
- An understanding of the various kinds of approaches to pastoral care in the history of the Christian movement.
- An understanding of theories of change.
- Awareness of various kinds of presenting problems that come to pastors.

2. Valuing and Feeling

- An appreciation of the profound importance of pastoral care in the life of the local congregation.
- An appreciation of the role of the local church in the shepherding of the congregation.

3. Skill

- An awareness of basic skills in listening, asking questions and conducting a counselling conversation.
- A confidence in being able to enter the "fellowship of suffering" that pastoral care offers.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Below is an approximate schedule of the topics we will cover in class, subject to change according to needs and questions from the students, and the whims of the instructor.

1. Biblical, theological, and historical foundations of pastoral care
2. Psychological correlates: understanding people, problems and how we change
3. Basic pastoral counselling skills: listening, questioning, guiding
4. Some approaches to pastoral care: the use of stories
5. Issues in pastoral care and counselling – illness, trauma and bereavement
6. Issues in pastoral care and counselling – Multicultural issues; demonic influence, sexual abuse, addiction, group counselling
7. Issues in pastoral care and counselling – theodicy, Anxiety, depression and addiction
8. Issues in pastoral care and counselling – Ministry to marriage and family

CLASS PROCEDURES

We will meet online using the Zoom platform daily beginning at 9:00 a.m. Saskatchewan time. You will be sent a link via email inviting you to join the meeting. Content of our meetings will include lectures, discussion and student participation. Instruction and lecture will be

supplemented by small group interaction based on the content of the lectures, additional readings, and various other means to enrich the learning experience.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas.

Pre-Course Assignments:

Read each of the four required texts and write a one-page review of each. Also read the two chapters in the Sanders text and write another one-page review of them. Include at least one question that each of the authors raises for you.

Due: November 2, 2026

Value: 30%

Post-Course Assignments:

1. Write a paper describing your biblical and theological understanding of the foundations of the pastoral care ministry of the church. Include a section on the history of pastoral care through the centuries of Christian history.

Due: January 8, 2027

Length: 2400 words

Value: 50%

2. Write a paper exploring one pastoral care issue that interests you. Include a discussion of the pastoral care needs of the issue, an approach you would take, resources you might include, and the hopeful outcome that you might anticipate.

Both papers should be supported by a strong list of resources supporting your research.

Due: January 8, 2027

Length: 1200 words each

Value: 20%

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current [Seminary Calendar](#):

Attendance Policy

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Modular Course Schedules

Modular classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (Room 217 across from Academic Services), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Appleby, D. W., and Ohlschlager, G. eds. (2013). *Transformative encounters: the intervention of God in Christian counseling and pastoral care*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Augsburger, D. W. (1986). *Pastoral counseling across cultures*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Benner, David G. (1998). *Care of souls: revisioning Christian nurture and counsel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
- Berg, Sam (2015) Can Christians do narrative therapy? Original goodness instead of original sin as the starting point for theology and therapy. *The EMCAPP Journal: Christian psychology around the world*, 44-53. Followed by the Comment by Philip G. Monroe, 55-56.

- Berg, Sam (2023) *Healing disquiet: An integrative model for relational therapy*. Mossbank, SK: Living Water Press.
- Clinebell, Howard John (2011). Basic types of pastoral care and counseling: Resources for the ministry of healing and growth. Nashville: Abingdon
- Cooper-White, P. (2007). *Many voices: pastoral psychology in relational and theological perspective*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Crabb, Larry (1999). *The safest place on earth: Where people connect and are forever changed*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson
- Gingrich, Heather Davediuk, and Gingrich, Fred. C. (2017). *Treating trauma in Christian counseling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Johnson, E. L. (2018) *God and soul care: The therapeutic resources of the Christian faith*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.
- Kollar, Charles Allen (1997). *Solution-focused pastoral counseling: An effective short-term approach for getting people back on track*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Kraft, C. H. (2012). *I give you authority: practicing the authority Jesus gave us, revised edition*. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books.
- Malony, H. Newton, and Augsburger, David W. (2007) *Christian counseling: An introduction*. Nashville: Abingdon
- Mason, Karen (2014). *Preventing suicide: A handbook for pastors, chaplains, and pastoral counselors*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Oden, T. C. (1989) *Pastoral counsel*. New York: Crossroad.
- Oden, T. C., and Browning, D. S., eds. (1984). *Care of souls in the classic tradition*. Philadelphia; Fortress Press.
- Simpson, Amy (2013) *Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Church's Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InverVarsity Press
- Thomas, Frank, and Cockburn, Jack (1998). *Competency based counseling: Building on client strengths*. Creative pastoral care and counseling series, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.
- Hunsinger, Deborah van Deusen (1995). *Theology and pastoral counseling: A new interdisciplinary approach*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Wimberley, Edward P. (1994). *Using scripture in pastoral counseling*. Nashville: Abingdon.