



CO 790 Counselling Practicum I

Fall 2026

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Course Dates: November 29 - December 4, 2026 (***Note:** This class runs Sunday at 10:30 am to Friday at 1:30pm)

Course Delivery Method: In-person, on campus modular

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This practicum will focus on the person of the counsellor through the experiential integration of counselling skills and concepts into each student's natural way of being. Qualities of highly effective counsellors will be highlighted and gifts within the student explored.

Prerequisite: CO 603 Foundations of Systemic Therapy, CO 703 Counselling Skills and Procedures, and CO 705 Counselling Ethics.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course seeks to fulfill Briercrest Seminary-wide Outcome (S0) #2 and # 3 by enabling students to engage professionally and ethically as therapists in a way rooted in their sense of spiritual calling to the vocation and considering their formation as therapists.

This course seeks to fulfill the Master of Counselling (MC) /Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) Program Outcome (PO) #1 and 2 by providing an introduction to actual counselling with peers and group supervision based on recorded interactions. This course seeks to fulfill the Master of Arts in Clinical Counselling (MACC)/Master of Arts in Couple and Family Therapy (MACFT) PO # 4 through supervision groups, which explore self-of-the-therapist experiences, encouraging a reflective stance. This course also seeks to meet the CCPA requirement of training in counselling/communication skills and/or CACFT requirement of training in therapeutic skills (MC/MAMFT and MACC/MACFT PO #3)

This course enables students to utilize their counselling microskills to engage with peers in systemic, strength-focused conversations in a collaborative and empathetic manner (MACC/MACFT PO #1 and 2). This course also teaches students how to engage in ethical practice with peers during their counselling and group supervision. (MC/MAMFT PO #2 and MACC/MACFT PO # 3).

COURSE TEXTS

- Jones, R. S. (2019). *Spirit in Session: Working with Your Client's Spirituality (and Your Own) in Psychotherapy*. Templeton Press.
- Olthuis, James H. (2006). *The Beautiful Risk: A New Psychology of Loving and Being Loved*. Zondervan.
- Rober, P. (2021). The Dual Process of Intuitive Responsivity and Reflective Self-supervision: About the Therapist in Family Therapy Practice. *Family Process*, 60(3), 1033–1047.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/FAMP.12616> (Available through Canvas)
- Sbanotto, E. A. N., Gingrich, H. D., & Gingrich, F. C. (2016). *Skills for effective counseling: A faith-based integration*. InterVarsity Press.
- Zeytinoglu, S. (2016). The POTT Program: Step-by-Step. In *The Person of the Therapist Training Model* (pp. 14-26). Routledge. (Available through Canvas)

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

Students are required to use a laptop computer during the week. Students will be notified in advance of the course about how to purchase Supervision Assist, which will be used during the week (and continue to be used for CO 791 and internship). Cost of Supervision Assist is approximately \$250.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's APA Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/documents>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <https://textbooks.briercrest.ca/>.

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).

PROGRAM OUTCOMES (PO) MACC AND MACFT

Students and graduates will:

1. Demonstrate a systemic and strength-focused perspective on people and their problems.
2. Demonstrate competence in a client-centred, collaborative therapeutic approach.
3. Demonstrate ethical clinical practice.
4. Take a reflective stance in their clinical work.

Additional PO MACFT ONLY

5. Demonstrate skills in working with couples and families to improve their relationship quality.

COURSE OUTCOMES

1. The student will grow in self-reflection on their anxieties and strengths that they brought to the counselling context.
2. The student will grow in cognitive and affective self-awareness.
3. The student will gain a growing respect for the dignity of each person.
4. The student will develop in a client centered approach with a focus of empathy and genuineness with their client.
5. The student will gain an appreciation of the impact of counselling micro-skills, with a focus on reflective listening and questions.
6. The student will gain practice in taking a "not-knowing" stance with another person.
7. The student will learn the basic presuppositions and assumptions underlying a narrative approach to working with people.
8. The student will engage in clinical supervision and learn to seek guidance and receive feedback to inform their counselling work

COURSE PROCESS

1. Professional attire is expected throughout the week during all scheduled class events. We consider this "business casual" with sweaters, nice top, dress or cotton pants being very typical. Suits/blazers are not expected. Please do not wear any blue jeans (coloured dressier jeans are ok), casual t-shirts, sweatshirts, ath-leisure wear, torn or ripped clothing, or very casual footwear.
2. Orientation: Class begins with an in-person orientation on the Sunday @ 10:30am. Orientation will include an introduction to and getting acquainted with the other members of the practicum group, an overview of micro-skills, an explanation of procedures that we will follow throughout the rest of this practicum and CO 791 Practicum II, assignment of practicum partnerships, and other organizational details.
3. Counselling Triads/Quads: At the orientation, you will be assigned to a triad or quad who will be your practicum counselling partners throughout Practicum I. The configuration and sizes of the triads/quads will depend on overall course enrollment.
 - a. You will meet daily Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons with your triad/quad to counsel one another. Tuesday afternoon you will have a break from counselling one another and an opportunity to reflect on your learning up to that point.
 - b. You will digitally record each session with your practicum partner. Further details about recording will be provided closer to the start of the course.
 - c. All electronic recordings of sessions must be securely stored on your password-protected student Supervisor Assist account until the completion of the course, at which point they must be permanently deleted.
 - d. Presentation preparation: Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings you will prepare to present to your cohort supervision group the next morning. (Tuesday afternoon you will have a break from counselling one another and an opportunity to reflect on your learning up to that point). In preparation for presentations, you are asked to:

- i. Review the recording of the session (trainees who watch their recordings learn the fastest).
 - ii. Prepare a transcript of the clip that you will present in class (only to be saved in Supervisor Assist).
 - iii. List the counseling goal(s) that your "client" had, as well as your learning goals, and how this session contributed towards reaching them.
 - iv. List the theoretical ideas that influenced you in the session.
 - v. List reflections about your experience in session and any self-of-the-therapist insights.
 - vi. **Please come prepared to present. Don't just say, "please listen to my recording and tell me what you think!"**
4. Cohort Supervision Group: You will be assigned to a supervision cohort which will meet each morning Monday through Friday for approximately 4 hours with one of the faculty members. The configuration and sizes of the cohort groups will depend on overall course enrollment. The groups will provide opportunities to think theoretically about cases, within the limits of confidentiality, to discuss issues arising from the pairs, as a way to:
 - a. Explore the personal emotional reactions you had while in the session, and the ways in which your own story was evoked during your conversation with your practicum partner, so that these can become an aid rather than a hindrance in counselling. This is called person-of-the-counsellor work.
 - b. Begin the development of counselling conversational practices. This is called skills-of-the-counsellor work.
 - c. Experience the benefits of group supervision.

Group supervision will proceed as follows:

- a. Each student will present four times during the week. After reviewing your entire recording, you will choose a 5-7 minute "clip" to present to the group.
- b. You will have a 15-30-minute period in which to present and engage in conversation with the other members of the group and supervisors about issues relating to the material in the "clip."

The times above are approximate depending on the size of class enrollment. Please be aware that the group sessions may be video-recorded from time to time for purposes of supervision or training. You will be informed so as to give consent.

Confidentiality: Processes and content occurring within the triad/quads and cohort supervision are confidential. Students are expected to not discuss this outside of these groups, including with other practicum students in different cohorts. Should concerns arise for a student during the week, either in their role as therapist, client, or observer, these should be discussed with their cohort facilitator and not with any other students.

Note: Practicum I is an intense week, and students are required to eliminate other responsibilities in the week due to work required in the evenings.

Assignments:

Personal counselling: Students will receive 5 hours of personal counselling completed between Aug 1 and December 11, 2026. Please initiate this counselling no later than the end of September and allow

for a minimum of 3 months to complete your 5 sessions. It is recommended that this counselling focus on continued work from your CO 603 Genogram assignment and examine your self-of-the-counsellor issues that need further reflection and supervision to help you become a competent and skilled therapist:

- What family patterns or themes are most likely to be triggers in therapeutic relationships?
- How might your family of origin experiences or other experiences influence you relating to personality types that you find difficult?
- How did your family deal with difficult emotions (such as conflict, grief, etc.) and how do you now deal with them?
- What messages from your family, faith, and culture did you receive about interacting with those who are different from you? (such as race, gender, religion, disabilities, etc.)
- What other experiences impact how you relate to other people and aspects that may trigger you in the counselling relationship?

*When choosing a counsellor, counsellors seen **must** have a master's degree in counselling, be registered with a professional counselling association, and the counsellor must have a systemic orientation and understand the importance of self-of-the-therapist.* For a list of counsellors familiar with our program and those who work on a sliding scale for our students, please see the Counselling Student Resource page on Canvas.

For completion of this assignment, students must upload a letter from their therapist to Canvas indicating the dates and hours completed, therapist's professional credentials, and general statement indicating that sessions focused on family of origin and self-of-the-therapist themes.

While this assignment is not for marks, it is a requirement of the course. Students who do not complete all 5 counselling hours during the timeframe will fail the course.

Due date: December 11, 2026

Pre-Course Assignment:

Read all of the required pre-course reading. Based on your readings from: Zeytinoglu, S., Jones, R. S., Olthuis, James H., and Rober, P., write a 4-5 page self-of-the-therapist paper based on your reading addressing:

- Your understanding of self-of-the-therapist as a concept
- Key self-of-the-therapist themes you identified in your own life and how that might impact your work with clients, based from your reading; and
- Considerations for you as you think about the role of your own faith and the potential spirituality of clients in session.

Due date: November 23, 2026

Value: 15%

Mid-Course Assignment:

1. Based on the student presentations and cohort supervision process, the facilitator will evaluate students based on adequate development in:
 - a. Personal awareness and person-of-the-therapist insight
 - i. Self-awareness

- ii. Self-reflection
 - iii. Appropriate self-disclosure
- b. Supervision & cohort participation
 - i. Humility and openness to feedback
 - ii. Reflection upon their own experiences (self-of-therapist) as a triad/quad and cohort team member
 - iii. Provide helpful and encouraging feedback to others
- c. Skills of the therapist
 - i. Collaborative client-centered approach
 - ii. Empathy
 - iii. Curiosity without jumping to conclusions
 - iv. Beginning use of microskills

Due: Last day of class

Value: 30%

Post-Course Assignments:

1. Counselling clip and transcript:

- a. A 20-min continuous clip chosen from one of the four sessions. Please have this saved in Supervisor Assist, indicating it is for the final assignment.
- b. Transcript of both the therapist and the client's* content for the clip, including the times to begin viewing the clip. Self-reflection comments throughout the transcript, including self-of-the-therapist things that arose for you. Before the transcript include ½-1-page description of:
 - The context of the clip
 - Why you chose this clip
 - A paragraph after your transcript reflecting on self-of-the-therapist themes from this clip.
- c. In the above transcript and reflection paper, please do not use the name of your client, instead reference them generically as "client."

An alternate cohort facilitator will evaluate your counselling clip and transcript for:

- a. Client-centered, collaborative therapeutic stance with evidence of genuineness, empathy, and humility.
- b. Micro skills of listening, reflecting, and asking open-ended questions as observed in the clip.

Due: December 11, 2026

Value: 35%

2. Self-evaluation:

- a. Complete the Counsellor Disposition Assessment (CAD) self-assessment at <https://briercrest.forms-db.com/view.php?id=159555>;
- b. Write a 4-5-page self-evaluation paper describing:
 - a. Learning on being a therapist that took place during this practicum and your CAD self-assessment;
 - b. Your experiences as a therapist, client, and observer during the practicum;
 - c. Areas for future development as a therapist based on your CAD self-assessment and practicum learnings; and
 - d. goals for Practicum I.

Your cohort facilitator will evaluate you on:

- a. Counsellor Disposition Assessment (CAD) faculty assessment;
- b. Your engagement in the overall practicum processes and self-reflection on this;
- c. Growth in your self-of-the-therapist themes and awareness; and
- d. Your insights into areas for further development.

Due: December 11, 2026

Value: 20%

OVERALL EVALUATION

To proceed to Practicum II a grade of "B" is required for Practicum I. A grade of "B-" to "C+" will be considered a "conditional pass" and you will be required to do some remedial work before proceeding to Practicum II. A grade of "C" or below will mean that you will either be asked to do remedial work and repeat the practicum or to withdraw from the program.

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% of practicum with no planned absences. 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.

Course Schedules

Class begins on Sunday at 10:30 am and runs until Friday at 1:30 pm, for 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).