



CO 615 Working with Diverse Populations in Counselling

Winter 2027

Professor: Sari Faith

Email: sfaith@briercrest.ca

Phone:

Course Dates: January 12th- April 13th, 2027, Tuesdays 10:00 AM- 1:00 PM CST

-Please note, there will be no class February 16th for mod week

Course Delivery Method: Online

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on developing an appreciation for human diversity, including culture, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and the ability to attune to client socio-cultural contexts. It will also raise awareness of oppression, power, injustice and how this impacts the therapeutic process and how to adapt it to be more relevant for diverse populations.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course primarily seeks to fulfill the Master of Clinical Counselling (MACC) /Master of Arts in Couple and Family Therapy (MACFT) Program Outcome (PO) #4 by raising awareness of human diversity and how to take a reflective stance in clinical work with client, this course also fulfills PO #1 by bringing of contextual and systemic factors that influence clients. It also fulfills PO# 2 by increasing awareness of power dynamics in therapeutic relationships and how to prioritize collaboration. This course addresses PO#3 in enhancing ethical practice with diverse populations. This course also seeks to fulfill MACC/MACFT Seminary-wide Outcome (SO)# 2 and 3 by helping students serve God's kingdom in its diversity in a professional manner.

COURSE TEXTS

Fisher, L. (2021). *Diversity in Clinical Practice: A practical shame free guide to reducing cultural offenses & repairing cross-cultural relationships*. PESI Publishing.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (with Fontaine, P.). (2016). *A Knock On The Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools*. University of Manitoba Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Hook, J. N. (2014). Engaging Client with Cultural Humility. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 33(3), 277-280. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A385805845/EAIM?u=briercrest&sid=bookmark-EAIM&xid=2ca7660f>

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/currentstudents/documents>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/currentstudents/bookstore>.

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

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES (SO)

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 rigor), 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-centered, 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. Students will develop a nuanced understanding of their social location and how intersections of power and privilege impact the person of the therapist and clients.
2. Students will internalize the ability to attune to socio-cultural contexts and work with diverse family and cultural systems.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of Indigenous history in Canada with a focus on the family through a systemic lens, understand the effects of colonization, current issues in Canadian culture affecting Indigenous peoples, Calls to Action by the Truth & Reconciliation Commission, and the influence of these aspects on our engagement with Indigenous clients.
4. Students will investigate oppression, power and social injustice and how it affects clients and the therapeutic process, including barriers to access to services and bias within the counselling field.
5. Students will build adaptability in their therapeutic approach when working with culturally diverse clients and identify culturally relevant resources.

6. Students will form a theology of justice and come to a greater appreciation of the therapist's role of advocacy.
7. Students will understand the collaborative role in assisting clients to engage in self-advocacy and in seeking third-party support.
8. Students will internalize a broad appreciation of human diversity, as informed by a theology of being created in God's image.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

1. Developing Cultural Competence
2. Perspectives on Multicultural Diversity
3. Practical Strategies for Cultural Competence
4. Addressing Microaggressions
5. Common Cultural Experiences and Misunderstandings.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas. For all assignments, please use APA formatting. Please note: The use of AI, such as Grammarly, can only be used for final editing of the assignments. AI cannot be used to create the case study or to write the Truth and Reconciliation paper, and it cannot be used for any outline or content creation for any of the assignments. Acknowledgement of any AI use must be included in the assignment as per the Academic Honesty policy.

Pre-Course Assignments:

Reflection Paper — 20% of Final Grade

Due: January 12th, 2027

Assignment overview

- Value: 20% of your final grade.
- Course outcomes: SO#2, PO#4.
- Length: 2-3 pages total.
- Main theme: Reflect on cultural differences, how you want others to perceive your own cultural identity, and how you can build more loving and inclusive relationships with people who are different from you.
- Guiding concept: We are all "image bearers."

Part 1: Reflect on your own cultural identity

Length: 1-1.5 pages

Consider how you want others to perceive you when they learn about your cultural background and discover that it differs from their own.

Address the following questions:

- Your cultural identity
 - What cultural groups, experiences, values, and influences make up your personal cultural mosaic?
- How you want to be perceived
 - When someone learns about your cultural identity, how would you like them to see you?
 - What do you hope they understand about you?
- Values and positive impressions
 - What values, qualities, or positive characteristics do you hope to stand out?
 - What would you want the other person to remember about you?
- Connection to the concept of “image bearers”
 - How does this concept influence the way you want to be understood, respected, and valued by others?

Part 2: Reflect on an interaction with someone different from you

Length: 1–1.5 pages

Think of a time when you interacted with someone whose background, identity, beliefs, or experiences differed from your own, and the interaction did not go well.

Reflect honestly on the experience and consider the following questions:

- Reflect on what happened
 - Briefly describe the interaction.
 - What made you feel that the interaction did not go well?
- Identify areas of discomfort
 - What differences made you feel uncomfortable?
 - Were there assumptions, misunderstandings, or biases that may have influenced your response?
- Consider what you could have done differently
 - Looking back, how might you have responded differently?
 - What could you have done to improve the interaction?
- Recognize the other person's strengths
 - What strengths, talents, perspectives, or assets might this person bring to a group setting?
 - How could their differences contribute positively to a group?
- Consider how to show love and inclusion
 - What could you do differently in a future interaction to help this person feel loved, accepted, and valued?
 - How could you demonstrate respect, empathy, curiosity, and understanding?

In Class Activities:

1. Creation of a Cultural Genogram During class time: Breaking off into pairs, pretend one person is the client and the other is the therapist, the therapist will create a cultural genogram for their client. We will then switch roles and create another genogram. You may use

<https://creately.com/usage/genogram-template-example/> to make the genogram or draw one by hand. The genograms will briefly be presented to the group.

Due March 16th, 2027, Value 10%

2. Cultural competency presentation breakout group: Choosing a topic from a list posted on the course Canvas page, students will choose a topic to present on in a breakout group of up to five other students to increase our cultural competency in an area. The presentations will take place during the first five weeks of class and be 15-20 minutes in length. These small tutorial groups will be informal in nature where we will learn together, expertise is not expected.

Value 10%

Post-Course Assignments:

1. Case Study Assignment — 30% of Final Grade

Due: June 8th, 2027

Assignment overview

- Value: 30% of your final grade.
- Course outcomes: SO#3, PO#1, PO#2, PO#3, PO#4.
- Length: 7–9 pages, of text not including diagrams, as specified in the assignment description.
- Sources: Minimum of 6 peer-reviewed academic sources.
- Topic: A hypothetical client from a cultural group discussed in Part VI, Common Cultural Experiences and Misunderstandings, in Diversity in Clinical Practice (Fisher, L., 2021).

Step 1: Choose a cultural group from part VI of our Diversity in Clinical Practice (Fisher, L., 2021) text and create a case study

- Select a cultural group discussed in Part VI of the assigned textbook.
- Choose a group that differs from your own identity or background.
- Ideally, select a group you would benefit from learning more about.
- Create a hypothetical client who belongs to this group.
 - You may use a public figure or someone you know as inspiration.
 - Change all identifying information to protect the person's privacy.
- Write a systemic-focused case study that includes:
 - Relevant demographic information.
 - A genogram.
 - Family history.
 - Background information about the client's family and social systems.

Step 2: Reflect on cultural differences and your professional growth

Address the following questions in your paper:

- Why did you choose this cultural group?
- What areas of cultural understanding did you feel you lacked or wanted to develop further?
- How does the client's worldview differ from your own?
- How would you work to build and strengthen your therapeutic relationship with this client?
- What forms of advocacy might benefit this client within a therapeutic relationship?
 - Consider areas where the client may experience barriers, discrimination, or unequal access to care.
 - Explain how you could validate the client's experiences and concerns.
 - Discuss how you might advocate for the client when appropriate.

Step 3: Research cultural competency training

- Find a cultural competency training opportunity that focuses on your chosen cultural group.
- Explain in your paper:
 - What training opportunity you would choose.
 - Why you selected this training.
 - How the training could improve your cultural understanding and counselling practice.

Step 4: Research academic literature

Use at least 6 peer-reviewed academic sources to support your case study.

Your research should explore:

- How the client's culture may influence their approach to mental health care and counselling.
- Relevant systemic factors affecting the client.
- Individual factors that may influence the client's experiences.
- Cultural experiences, misunderstandings, or barriers that may arise in counselling.
- How the research findings can be applied to your work with this client.

Be sure to integrate the research into your discussion and explain its practical relevance to counselling.

Step 5: Write the conclusion

Write one or two concluding paragraphs explaining how the knowledge gained from this assignment will inform your future professional practice.

Discuss how you can apply the principles of:

- Developing cultural competence.
- Understanding multicultural diversity.
- Recognizing common cultural experiences and misunderstandings.
- Working effectively with clients and colleagues from cultural groups different from your own.

Include practical examples of how you might apply these lessons in future counselling relationships.

2. Truth and Reconciliation Reflection paper (SO#3, PO#4) due June 8th, 2027

In 6-8 pages and using essay format, respond to the CACFT reflection questions found here:

<https://camft.ca/trc-reflection-questions>

Value: 30%

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.

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.

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).