Course Description

This course introduces basic concepts, attitudes, and skills of pastoral counseling. Consideration is given to the fundamental process and skills of pastoral counseling to more effectively deal with common pastoral concerns and problems. It further covers professional ethics for pastoral ministers including issues such as boundaries, power differentials, confidentiality, and sexual misconduct. Systematic training and practice in basic responding and initiating skills are provided. Multicultural implications are included. [maximum enrollment: 15]

Objectives

1. Become familiar with the basic goals and process of ethical and effective pastoral care and counseling.
2. Explore oneself, increase self-reflection skills, and become better acquainted with what one brings to pastoral ministry and why.
3. Develop awareness of steps that leaders in the Church can take to become more positive forces for meeting human needs and fostering cooperation with multicultural sensitivity.
4. Become acquainted with findings from research and practice regarding effective helping skills and their pastoral applications.
5. Develop and refine helping skills through systematic training and practice to establish empathic relationships using clear, effective communication skills.
6. Integrate didactic and experiential learnings to develop personal guidelines for helping that can be applied to a variety of pastoral problems, situations, and populations.

Components and Requirements

1. Readings: The following books will be used for class preparation, discussion, and practice:
   A selected bibliography will be provided containing suggestions for supplementary readings and independent study.

2. Input/Discussion: The first part of each class will be devoted to developing an understanding of major concepts that contribute to ethical and effective pastoral care and counseling with a variety of people, issues, and concerns.

3. Training/Role-Playing: The second part of each class will be devoted to systematic training and practice in developing basic helping skills and strategies for use in effective pastoral
ministry. Students will be asked to present selected real or role-playing concerns and take

turns functioning both as helper and helpee with this material in order to practice and develop

a hierarchy of skills.

4. **Recorded Skills Practice:** You are encouraged to use a recording device and routinely

practice the hierarchy of helping skills outside of class. Each student is required to record a

minimum of two helping sessions of approximately 20-30 minutes with a volunteer client for

practice and self assessment—the first during the first week of instruction, and the second to

be submitted following the midterm examination. During the first week of the course, record

a helping session using your own natural communication style. The objective of the first

required session is to obtain a baseline of your performance and your natural style before

training. The objectives of the second helping session are to (a) compare the similarities and

differences in your style before and after you have had some training, (b) assess your helping

skills development, and (c) receive feedback from the instructor. Guidelines will be provided

for developing the practice sessions and completing an accompanying written self-evaluation.

5. **Examinations:** Two examinations will be administered. They will be designed to assess

knowledge of the basic helping skills studied and proficiency in the use of these skills

developed during the training period.

6. **Independent Study/Readings:** You are expected to supplement required course material

with an independent study and readings on a specific topic of your choice in an area of

desired ministry skills. Your topic should be submitted by the third class of instruction. The

outcome of your study will be incorporated in your final integration paper. A bibliography

indicating the readings actually done must be submitted with the final integration paper.

(Refer to Appendix A for details)

7. **Reflection Journal:** Keeping a written reflection journal is a required part of the learning

experience. Primarily a depository for your learnings, its entries form the basis for the final

integration paper. (Refer to Appendix B for details)

8. **Final Integration Paper:** A 10-15 page typed (double-spaced) final integration paper is to

be submitted by the last class meeting. It should be a statement of your developing synthesis

of the nature, goals, and process of ethical and effective pastoral care and counseling. Based

upon your reflection journal entries, your final paper should present an integration of your

personal thinking with the learning resources of the course. (Refer to Appendix C for details)

9. **Evaluation/Grading:** A student's grade will be determined by (a) regular class attendance

and quality of participation [influences the "+" or "-" quality of the grade], (b) knowledge of

the helping process and proficiency of helping skills as assessed by two examinations [each

1/3 of grade], and (c) the comprehensiveness and quality of the final integration paper and

supplementary readings completed [1/3 of grade]. For a description of grades, see the current

DSPT Catalog.

10. **Attendance/Absences:** Students are expected to attend class sessions and participate in

discussion and practice activities. For a description of attendance regulations, see the current

DSPT Catalog.
Course Outline

I. INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELING
   Distinctions: Pastoral Care, Pastoral Counseling, and Spiritual Direction
   Goals and Process of Pastoral Care and Counseling

II. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR PASTORAL MINISTERS
   Ministry as Vocation and Profession
   The Minister’s Character and Virtues
   The Dynamics of Power: Personal Power, Boundaries, and Assessing the Use of Power
   The Critical Issues of Sexuality and Confidentiality
   Pastoral Care and Moral Guidance

III. PASTORAL COUNSELING: THE BASICS
   The Counselee: “Can You Talk with Me?”
   The Pastoral Counselor as Witness
   Strategies of Brief Pastoral Counseling
   Counseling as God’s Call

IV. PASTORAL CARE EMERGENCIES
   The Carer and the Caring: Who We Are and How We Go about It
   Responding to Persons’ Needs in Situational Crises
      Visiting the Physically Ill
      Hospital Emergencies
      Ministry to the Dying
      Pastoral Response to Bereavement
      Responding to Suicidal Persons and Their Families
      Marriage and Family Life: Family Systems, Counseling, Divorce, Family Violence, Psychiatric Emergencies
      When and How to Refer

V. BASIC HELPING SKILLS TRAINING: RESPONDING AND INITIATING SKILLS
   Basic Responding Skills: Introduction and Overview
      Attending Behavior: The Foundation of Effective Listening
      Questions: Open Invitation to Talk
      Clarifying: The Minimal Encourager and Paraphrase
      Responding to Feelings and Emotions
      Summarization: Integrating Client Behavior, Thoughts, and Feelings
      Integration of Skills: Structuring an Effective Interview
   Basic Initiating Skills: Introduction and Overview
      The Basic Listening Sequence: Searching for Strengths and Solutions
      Focusing the Narrative: Helping the Client See Multiple Perspectives
      Confrontation: Supporting While Challenging
      Directives: Suggesting Direct Action to Help
      Feedback and Self-Disclosure: Toward Deeper Communication
      Interpretation/Reframing: Changing the Meaning of the Story
      Integration of Skills: The Five Stage Interview

VI. DEVELOPING A PERSONAL SYNTHESIS
   Independent Study / Readings
   Reflection Journal
   Final Integration Paper