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 regulations, see the *DSPT Catalog*. 

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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. 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
   Crisis Counseling: A Unique Approach

III. 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

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 Encourage, Restatement, and Paraphrase
   Responding to Feelings; Emotional Regulation
   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: Taking 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