1PSY622
Relationship of Theology and Psychology A
Fall, 2012

Integrative Courses in the MFTC Program

The whole curriculum of the MFTC program is designed to prepare students to practice biblically-faithful, research informed counseling. Within the curriculum, a core set of seven carefully structured courses spread throughout the curriculum focuses on the relation of Scripture, theology, psychology and counseling.

- **1PSY622** (first semester of the program) addresses the theological basis for an integrative use of theological and psychological studies, fundamental stances of various Christian traditions regarding the relationship of Christianity and culture, and considers the implications of the transition from pre-modern to modern to post-modern epistemologies (supernaturalism, empiricism, corporate subjectivism) as they relate to psychology and theology.

- **1PSY624**, (second semester of the program) pays special attention to a biblical understanding of mankind, to a framework for understanding the life situation of fallen humanity between the first and second coming of Christ and the process of change in the Scripture. Biblical teaching about relationships of men and women in the family, society and the church and the church as a therapeutic community receive attention. The latter part of the second course examines crucial passages in Romans regarding the process and goals of change and the handling of difference and conflict in Christian life.

- **1PSY569 Neurobiology** (first semester of clinical practice), examines general revelation knowledge in the area of neuroscience and relates it to biblical teaching and therapeutic process with particular attention to Emotion Focused Therapy and Pragmatic Experiential Therapy.

- **1NT613** (first semester of clinical practice), examines Pauline teaching on personal relationships in connection with the general revelation neuroscience and clinical materials from 1PSY569 and in preparation for the protocols to be studied in 1PSY572.

- **1PSY 572 Advanced Individual and Systemic Therapy** (second semester of clinical practice) examines a variety of major contemporary evidenced-based and research-informed treatment approaches, evaluates them in the light of previous work in theology and psychology, helps students develop skill employing the approaches in a clinical setting and helps students actively to develop and to implement biblically-faithful and psychologically informed treatment processes.

- **1OT513 Old Testament Wisdom Literature for Christian Counseling**, taken in the third semester of clinical practice, allows students with significant clinical experience to explore the Old Testament wisdom literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) and to relate it to their actual clinical practice.

- **1PSY626**, taken in the final semester of the program after approximately 500 hours of supervised clinical experience, calls on students to prepare two seminar presentations drawn from their actual clinical practice. One presents samples of their actual clinical practice in which they are dealing with Scripture and realities of Christian life as they work with clients. The second is a comprehensive presentation of a specific case, in which they have carefully studied the range of theologically-based and research-based approaches to issues involved in the case and then developed and applied the resultant integrative treatment process with the clients.
Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the first integrative course students will have an understanding of

- The relation of theology and psychology, of general and special revelation
- The stances of various major Christian traditions regarding the relation of Christianity and culture
- The intellectual frameworks within which psychology has developed and currently functions.

Course Process:

Note that the course meets four consecutive weeks at the end of the term in the same time slot as 1PSY564. The reading list is not very long, but you have some reflective papers to complete by the end of the term. Some of them require the class lectures before they can be completed. Please allow yourselves time in your academic schedule at the end of term for the papers.

Meetings 1 and 2 will examine the relation of Scripture, theology and psychology with an eye to the relation of special revelation, general revelation and common grace. Students will read the four articles by Welsh/Powlison and Hurley/Berry in JPC, Winter, 1997.

Meeting 3 and 4 will examine the relationship of Christianity and culture in major Christian traditions and the philosophical transitions from pre-modern to modern to post-modern epistemology. Alongside the lectures, students will be considering the implications of various worldviews common to our day (cf. Sire reading).

Assignments (by date)

Note: Turning in all assignments is a necessary but insufficient condition of passing the course. A penalty will be assessed for lateness in assignments.

1. Evaluative report: Scripture references (10%) November 5

The Scripture will be drawn upon throughout your time at RTS. Some portions, such as individual verses in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, are intended to be read over and reflected on as pithy sayings and then brought to bear in appropriate contexts. Other portions must be read carefully in their context, such as portions of Acts or Paul’s letters (You would not want to lay the words of the sons of Sceva on a client without thinking carefully about their relevance). At this stage in the program, it is valuable to become acquainted with passages often used by pastors and counselors.

- Kruis offers a brief text that gathers passages that he believes are relevant to topics such as depression, loss and anxiety.
- Hurley’s protocol is a clinical tool to shape a treatment process relevant to couples. It’s use of scripture is much more narrowly aimed.

In both texts, the texts are not like pills to be dumped on people as they face problems. As you do your biblical studies and work through your courses, your wisdom at exegesis and contextual application of Scripture will develop. Your assignment, for this course, comes in two portions:

1. Kruis
   a. Reading: Take time to read over Kruis’ text, from cover to cover, reflecting on the texts, how they might speak constructively to a life situation and how they might be used in a destructive way. Reflective reading means slowly reading the biblical verse, thinking about what it means and then how it might be brought to bear in a real life situation. As you enter the clinic, you will make more detailed use of Kruis!
   b. Evaluative pages: Kruis’ verse selection for each chapter reflects his understanding of and guidance for the topic of the chapter. Pick one chapter as your focus. Read over the verses that he gathers and write a no-more-than-two-pages summary of the basic understanding of and approach to the problem that Kruis is advocating by his selection of verses, i.e. when you boil it down, what do the verses selected advocate as a problem
definition and solution(s). This is a thought exercise. Take some time to think it out and explain your conclusions carefully, being as explicit as you can. Include on the cover of your paper a statement indicating what portion of Kruis’ book you have reflectively read (Note: your assignment is 100%).

2. Read over the Hurley Protocol, thinking through how the texts cited relate to the item being discussed.
   a. Evaluative page: Write a one page comment on your eyeball assessment the usefulness or non-usefulness of the texts Hurley uses for making his points. Some of the texts are more simply applied than others. In your evaluation, be sure to explain your conclusions and to illustrate them with reference to specific texts used by Hurley. NOTE: You are under NO obligation to like Hurley’s use of text. Every effort will be made to grade your reflective process rather than your stance toward the texts selected.
   b. Your idea: Select two of the Hurley check sheet items and, for each one, identify a scripture passage (other than those used by Hurley) that you might use to help a client see that Scripture leads them toward the skill/behavior/attitude in the item. Write up a brief explanation of the points that you would like to make to help the client understand. Your prof understands that you are not yet in clinic.

   You may also hold the view that Scripture does NOT point you in one of the directions that Hurley advocates. You are certainly free to take that stance. If you do, write your own item and present text to support your point.

Due date: Hand your report in at the MFT office by 4:00 PM on the due date. Include on the cover the due date and time, the actual date and time it is handed in, and the difference, clearly indicating whether the paper is before or after the deadline (late or early).

2. Interview report: Interview about theology and psychology (15%) Nov. 30

Meet with a member (not minister) of a church representing a markedly different Christian tradition or different religion entirely (such as Jewish or Islamic or Buddhist) than your own. This is your chance to reach across usual boundaries! Ask them to explain to you their view of how they would want their religious beliefs to come in if they were to go to someone for counseling. It would probably be helpful to you to know about things such as how they might choose their counselor, for which kinds of problems (could be different persons for different problems), exactly how their religion would come in, how important it would be that the counselor share the interviewee’s faith, that the counselor have a faith of their own, use religious texts from their faith (if their faith has any), what role they would want God to play in their counseling or the outcome of it.

Write a paper of less than 10 pages presenting the view of your interviewee and evaluating their view in relation to the lecture and reading materials presented in this course. Classify your interviewee in terms of Niebuhr’s and/or Entwhistle’s categories.

Due date: Hand your paper in at the MFT office by 4:00 PM on the due date. Include on the cover the due date and time, the actual date and time it is handed in, and the difference, clearly indicating whether the paper is before (early) or after the deadline (late).

3. Intellectual history/Worldview Exam: (20%) November 20, 8-11

Worldviews have consequences. Jim Sire looks at a variety of worldviews from a Christian perspective. Students will become familiar with the basic worldviews presented by Sire and with the flow of intellectual history presented in class by Dr. Hurley. The exam will ask students to demonstrate an ability to identify worldviews from statements, to compare worldviews and to discuss the implications of those worldviews. Students are urged to prepare for the exam by working in study groups, developing brief
summaries/outlines of Sire’s worldviews based on his chapter outlines and by discussing them to become familiar with them

4. Paper: Comparing positions (45%) Dec. 4

The relation of faith and learning has been a subject of discussion for a very long time. The respective roles of psychology/counseling (learning) and faith with respect to how to live life and how to change are the subjects of much debate in the evangelical world. Many perceive counseling as a secular substitute for sanctification and psychological theories as substitutes for biblical instruction. Others see them as essentially separate. Worthington’s text, Entwhistle’s book on Psychology and Christianity, together with the Powlison/Welsh/Hurley/Berry readings and class lectures offer you a couple of frameworks by which to describe positions on the relationship of theology and therapy. For this assignment, each student should pick two contrasting positions regarding the relation of theology and therapy, as represented by associations or individuals (not including Hurley, Berry or Entwhistle). The student should then review literature by the selected representatives and prepare a paper of not more than 15 pages presenting, comparing, contrasting and critiquing the respective positions in relation to one another and to the frameworks presented in this course. Conceptual clarity is more important than length in your paper.

Due date: Hand your paper in at the MFT office by 4:00 PM. Include on the cover the due date and time, the actual date and time it is handed in, and the difference, clearly indicating whether the paper is before (early) or after the deadline (late).

5. Assigned readings (10%) Dec. 4

Your comparison paper should include a statement on the cover indicating that you have read the assigned readings for the course. If you have not completed the readings, indicate exactly what you have read.

Readings

2) Annual Covenant of Nouthetic Counselors (online: https://www.nanc.org/page.asp?contentid=22&sub=1)
7) Passantino, B. and G., Psychology and the church (Four parts), (online: equip.org/free/DP220-1.htm
9) Sire, James (1997), The Universe Next Door, IVP
Course Schedule:

10/15  **Theology and psychology as sciences under revelation:**
       **Exegetical issues**
       Readings: All save Sire; especially Hurley/Berry/Powlison/Welsh

10/22  **Theology and psychology as sciences under revelation:**
       **Theological issues**
       Readings: All save Sire; especially Hurley/Berry/Powlison/Welsh

10/29  **Philosophical transitions**
       Readings: Entwistle/Hurley/Berry/Worthington

11/05  **Scripture reference report due**

11/05  **Christ and culture**
       Entwistle/Sire/Class notes

11/30  **Interview report due**

11/20  **Final exam: 8-11 AM**

12/04  **Comparison paper and reading statement due**