Reformed Theological Seminary-Orlando  
PSY592 Addictions  
3 Credit Hours  
January 4 – 8, 2016  
Sharon A. Hersh, M.A., LPC

“Misplaced attachment to what cannot satiate the soul is not an error exclusive to addicts, but is the common condition of mankind. It is this ubiquitous mind-state that leads to suffering and calls prophets, spiritual directors, and great teachers into our midst. Our designated “addicts” march at the head of a long processing from which few of us every step away.”

Gabor Maté, M.D. – *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters With Addiction*

**Course Instructor**

Sharon A. Hersh M.A., LPC, CLC has been a therapist for twenty years and continues with an active practice that has an emphasis in addiction, relationships, adolescents, sexuality, and personal transformation. She is an author, speaker, teacher, and certified life coach. She is the author of several books, including *The Last Addiction*, the best-selling *Bravehearts*, and her most recent book *- Begin Again, Believe Again*. She has written five parenting books including the award-winning Bible Study, *Mothering Without Guilt*. She is a frequent speaker and teacher at universities, seminaries, conferences, and retreats.

**Office hours:** By appointment.

**Course Description**

This course is designed to engage students in an examination of substance abuse and addiction and the impact on the individual as well as the dynamics of family systems. The course will include an understanding of addiction as well as an introduction to different models of counseling. Students will have an opportunity to explore specific addictions as well as develop an integrated approach to recovery that includes biological, psychological, and spiritual categories. Classes will be in seminar format and will include lectures, readings, film, and discussion.
Course Objectives

Through class assignments, students will demonstrate the following:

1. Understanding of the problems of substance abuse and others addictions, including major signs and symptoms and appropriate methods of assessment, while uncovering personal assumptions and biases in treating addiction.
2. Knowledge of various treatment modalities and applicability to specific addictions.
3. Students will learn to develop an integrated model for understanding addiction, using current literature (class texts, novels and other addiction literature, current research, films) and the Scriptures (including, but not limited to Romans 1:18-25, Ephesians 4:7-17, Exodus 13f).
4. Knowledge of treatment resources in the community for clients with addictions.
5. Students are asked to prepare a class presentation with an integrated treatment plan.

“It’s about the hole in the heart.”
- Addiction for Dummies

Course Content, Topics and Schedule

1/04/16    Course overview & syllabus review
            The Evidence of Addiction
            Biblical passages (Roman 1; Ephesians 4)
            The Energy of Addiction
            The Experience of Addiction
            The Path of Recovery & Renewal

            Come to class having read:
            In the Real of Hungry
            of Hungry Ghosts or
            The Last Addiction

            Attend 12-step meeting sometime during week.

1/05/16    The Biology of Addiction

            “Nothing records the effects of a sad life so much as the geographically of the human body.”
            Naguib Mahfouz – Palace of Desire

            Men & Addiction
            Women & Addiction
            The Addicted Family

            Come to class having read:
            The Biology of Desire or
            Addiction & Grace
Drug Addiction

“The first time I heard about black holes in space, I felt like I intuitively understood them: They absorb any light coming near them and crush it. I felt like that . . . like a black hole in space – that’s how I’ve always felt. That exactly it.”
Johann Hari – Chasing The Scream

Adolescents & Addiction
Gaming & Social Med

Eating Addictions
Sexual Addictions

“The story of your life is the story of a long and brutal assault on your heart by the one who knows what you could be and fears it.”
John Eldredge

Course Requirements

Attendance is mandatory for all five days of class. The required reading is a significant part of this course and students are asked to complete the reading by the assigned dates. Your final grade will be an average of completed reading, reflection paper, class participation, and final presentation. Missing class hours may result in the loss of a letter grade in the class.
Reading: In order to fully participate in class discussion, students will complete required reading by the date specified on the Syllabus. At the end of the week, students will indicate on a Required Reading and Assignments form (provided in class) that they completed the reading and attended a 12-step meeting.

Class Presentation/Discussion: Students will take a Step Four Personal Inventory (this will be provided and explained in class) and present, for discussion in the class on 1/08/16, their understanding of addiction, treatment concerns, and treatment possibilities based on their own Inventory.

Paper:

Due: 1/07/16: Two-page reflection paper addressing the evidence, energy, or experience of addiction and personal assumptions about addiction (from class discussion, 12-step meeting, and reading).

Course Policies

1. Grading Policy:
   - Class Participation: 50%
   - Reflection Paper: 25%
   - Step Four Inventory and Presentation: 25%

2. Grading Scale:
   - A 94-100
   - B 93-85
   - C 84-76
   - F 75 or below

3. It is expected that written products will be legible, professional in appearance, and error-free. They are to be typed and double-spaced. APA guidelines are required for all papers.

4. No email papers or late papers accepted.

Course Books:

Required:

Read one of the following two texts for an overview of addiction and recovery:
In this book the author locates the source of addictions in the trauma of an emotionally empty childhood, making it a relational rather than a medical problem. The book is filled with scientific evidence and personal narratives.

The Last Addiction: Why Self-Help is Not Enough, Sharon Hersh, M.A., LPC, ISBN: 0877882037
Much of the material in this book will be included in class lectures. This book looks at all of possibilities we can turn into the idols of our hearts, and focuses on a spiritual solution that includes acknowledging the last addiction – the idea that we can save ourselves with the selves that led us into addiction in the first place. We cannot set ourselves free. We must be set free.

Read one of the following two texts to understand the biology of addiction and the perspectives of addiction as a disease and addiction as an “unintended consequence of the brain . . . seeking pleasure and relief – in a world that is not cooperating:

Addiction and Grace, Gerald May, ISBN: 0060655372
This book is a classic, and one of the best books on the subject in the field, written by a medical doctor who discovered, while treating drug addicts, that the obsession and compulsion of those addictions is something that we all experience in more subtle ways. The highlights of this book are a biological and emotional understanding of the attachment of addiction as well as what is required for healing.

The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction is Not A Disease, Marc Lewis, Ph.D., ISBN: 1610394372
Through vivid stories, this renowned neuroscientist explains why the “disease model” of addiction is wrong and illuminates the path to recovery. Lewis shows why treatment based on the disease model so often fails, and how treatment can be retooled to achieve lasting recovery; given the realities of brain plasticity.

Recommended reading if you are looking for treatment plans and specifics of treatment:


Students will choose one of the following memoirs (required):

This is an eloquently written book at one woman’s struggle with alcoholism and relational addictions.
The son of television journalist, Bill Moyers, tells his agonizing story of addiction to alcohol and crack-cocaine. This page-turner tells the story of one man’s fall from the top of the media world to the shame of hiding in a crack house.

This is a beautifully written book about eating addictions. The author tells the truth about the battle in the mind that often destroys the body with, unflinching truth, and with an understanding of the importance of self-compassion as well as the care of a Power greater than ourselves.

This is another beautifully written book by the parents of a drug addict. The author is honest about his co-dependency and his desperate search to help his son. He takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride of emotions as well as his personal journey to accept the power of addiction, and that it is more powerful than human love.

I highly recommend this book! The author describes radical objectification and often brutal denigration of women in porn, and brilliantly links it to how this leaks into other aspects of our lives. Dines's argument rests on a compelling, close reading of the imagery and narrative content of magazines, videos, and marketing materials; what is missing, however, is a similarly compelling body of research on how these images are used by viewers.

**Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs**, Johann Hari
ISBN: 1620408902
This books many stories about a variety of addictions that have impacted people across the world who have been affected by drug addiction. (This is the only resources I have on addiction in other countries, as well as in the U.S. These stories lay bare what we have really been chasing in our century of drug war – in our hunger for drugs and in our attempt to destroy them.

**Course Format:**
Lecture, class discussion, student presentations, movie clips, music, and examination of relevant Biblical passages.
## Course Objectives Related to MAC Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** Addictions - 02PSY592/01  
**Professor:** Sharon A. Hersh, M.A., LPC  
**Campus:** Orlando, FL  
**Date:** January 4, - January 8, 2016

### MAC Student Learning Outcomes

*In order to measure the success of the MAC curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MAC outcomes.*  
*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Minimal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Articulation (oral & written)

- Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of addiction through the reading, class participation, and in written assignments, an essential Biblical perspective that is highlighted in every category in the course, including understanding theological, historical, cultural/global, and personal and personal experiences. Students will be able to identify the external and internal realities that suggest why someone struggles with addiction and offer a unique and integrated framework for helping others.

### Scripture

- Significant knowledge of several Biblical passages (including Romans 1 and Ephesians 4 will be discussed. Students will be given a Biblical framework to address their own potential idolatry and to use the Scriptures to challenge, convict and compel them to become intentional in their integration of their own understanding of academic knowledge, Biblical categories, and their own personal stories. The Scriptures are encouraged to consider - in every context where addiction is evident – to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply it to a variety of modern circumstances (by including appropriate use of original languages, hermeneutics, and integrated theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)

### Strong

- Students will articulate through classroom participation, written work and classroom presentations/ discussions, an integrated Biblical, historical (both from the students’ own experiences and from the cultural “war on drugs”) a broad understanding of addiction and recovery. Although addiction in the U.S. is primarily addressed, students will have an opportunity to gain some knowledge of the similarities and differences in other countries.

- Student will study the original meaning of multiple Scripture passages that both illuminate an understanding of addiction as well as a path for recovery. Every aspect of addiction and recovery will be grounded in Biblical truth. Students will be encouraged to research further; to apply Scripture to their own lives; and to feel confident in helping others who may be in dire circumstances, desperate for the Good News that says, “You are blessed if you hunger and thirst after righteousness; you will be satisfied.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reformed Theology</th>
<th>The course will include, as a foundation for every aspect of addiction, a significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with consideration of the Westminster Standards.</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>The students will be encouraged to understand and put into practice their faith in the Triune God who is the Truth, the Life, and the Way, who clothes us in His righteousness and proclaims to every person - addict or caregiver - the hope of sanctification that, “It is for freedom that we are set free.”</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be asked to look at their personal lives through the lens of a model of recovery in a way that offers them the opportunity for personal transformation as well as a passion to invite others to sanctification through confession and repentance, connection to others in community, and the fellowship of communion with others and with God.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Worldview</td>
<td>Students will be encouraged, as they understand the categories of addiction and the innumerable possibilities to become entangled with idols of the heart, to offer their own brokenness and redemption to the world as well as to use the class material to look at how other cultures might view addiction and recovery.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every category of addiction and recovery from is discussed with a desire to encourage the student to conform to the Word of God and lead others, regardless of their unique circumstances to share common themes: we all suffer from the same condition; we all are tempted to make something central in our lives besides God; and we all must surrender in order to find freedom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winsomely Reformed</td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in that allows students to view those who struggle with addiction no different from those of us who have more “acceptable” idols of the heart, and to offer an approach that believes, “that the kindness of God is harder than the softness of men, because He is compulsive about our liberation.” (Nouwen)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This class uses current film, music, and modern-day stories about those who have struggled with addiction and found redemption. These struggles can range from people-pleasing to video games to heroin, with a unifying theme that suggests a model for surrender to a “Power” greater than ourselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scriptures with regard to addiction and recovery to both heart and mind with clarity and the passion that comes out of personal experience; “that we love, because He first loved us: and the one who has “been forgiven much, loves much.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For those called to preach, this call will prepare the student to address relevant issues about addiction using Scripture as the final authority for offering 100% truth and 100% grace.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms, and ability to become the “lead worshipper” as you lead worship. Worship is possible only to the degree that we know that we are not god, and that God is exalted when we do not hide our struggles because we can rest in His loving-kindness that endures forever. The most profound worship, as demonstrated by the Apostle Paul and Silas in Acts 16, often comes from profound bondage and the deep knowing that God is the only one we can turn to, “for He alone has the words of life.”</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide, using addiction and recovery as the most ideal context to talk about the too-good-to-be-true Gospel; including God’s love for us - not for what we do - but because of who we are in Christ Jesus; and ways in which we can love others who are caught in the trap of addiction because we know that an addict is not who they most deeply are – but they are image-bearers who need us to help “Bear their burdens and moral failures, and in doing so, we fulfill the perfect law of love in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 6:1,2)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and individuals who are confronting the cunning and baffling experience of addiction.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>