Course Description

This course is designed to help pastors, counselors and those who minister to couples. We will examine the Biblical and theological principles guiding marriage and how God uses His Word to help people grow. We will emphasize practical skills, basic counseling abilities, assessing problems, resolving conflict, building positive communication patterns, reconciliation and forgiveness. Included will be help for pre-marital counseling. We will study possible underlying psychological issues individuals may deal with, and try to answer the question “When is it time to refer?” We will explore family of origin issues and attachment theory as they relate to marriage and to parenting. The course will benefit from the results of 40 years of clinical research by Dr. John Gottman as he sought to understand what makes for happiness in marriage and how to build trust in relationships.

September 8. Syllabus/Biblical Principles and Theological Commitments;
   Read Keller, Intro. and Chapters 1-3. Please do the reading assigned in Keller before our first class meeting.
September 15. Counseling Skills; Pre-marital Workbook; Marriage Assessment
   Read Keller, Chapters 4-8 plus Appendix; Read Smith, (whole book).
September 22. Gottman on Marriage;
   Read Gottman/Silver, Chapters 1-7
September 29. Gottman; Conflict Styles; Biblical Principles of Forgiveness
   Read Tripp, Chapters 1-6
October 6: Reading Week
October 13. Communication Patterns; Male/Female Roles
Read Gottman/Silver, Chapters 8-end; Tripp, Chapters 7-15
October 20. Family and Parenting; Attachment Theory; Genograms
   Read Siegel/Hartzell, Introduction through Chapter 6
October 27. Divorce and Remarriage (Guest Lecturer—Dr. Howard Griffith);
Read Siegel/Hartzel, Chapter 7 to end
November 3. Sexual Intimacy; Underlying Clinical Problems
Project due.

Course Requirements

a. Lectures and attendance: A number of class sessions will include counseling practice in the form of role-playing, in order to give practical experience. Each student needs to be prepared to answer questions related to that day’s reading assignment. Attendance therefore is an absolute requirement.

Class Participation: 20%

b. Reading
The Meaning of Marriage, Timothy Keller, with Kathy Keller, 2011.
Parenting From The Inside Out, Daniel J. Siegel and Mary Hartzell, 2013 (please get this updated version)

Please do the reading assigned in Keller before our first class meeting (see readings assigned for September 8).

Completed Reading Assignments: 20%.

IMPORTANT: Include, with the final project, a Reading Report that says what percentage of the required reading you completed.

c. Case Studies

Each student will write up two to three of the case studies/role plays presented in class. Describe what your group did in class today, and give a plan for what you would do in future sessions, including: which marital
issues need to be addressed? How would you address them in the next few sessions? What homework assignments would you give? Due dates TBA.

Case Studies: 20 %

d. Project:

Prepare a six to eight week course that you can use to teach either Pre-Marriage Preparation or Marriage Enrichment. This should be detailed enough for you to use. Include what topics you will cover, and what you will say under each of these topics (in detailed outline form). Each lesson should include assigned reading and homework (e.g., discussion questions; Bible study; practice exercises). There are many programs available for each of these topics—you may use them to aid you, but do not replicate any one of them. Please include material from readings and lectures (use a shorthand way to note where they are from for my benefit). Incorporating material from lectures and readings will enhance your grade. 10-12 pages (12 point font), due at the beginning of class on November 3. IMPORTANT: Include, with the final project, a Reading Report that says what percentage of the required reading you completed.

Project: 40%