

CO5910 Practicum I
8:30 – 12:00 Thursdays
Spring 2022

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Office hours by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Practicum I provides students the opportunity to practice counseling in a variety of contexts while being observed by experienced counseling mentors. This observed and critiqued counseling will help students grow in their ability to care for God's people through the wise interpretation of individual's circumstances and life, and the right application of Scripture and theology. Practicum I prepares students for the independent counseling of Practicum II/III.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course objectives for the class are threefold:

- 1) For the student to grow in their ability to discern human experience of their counselees.
- 2) For the student to grow in their ability to interpret their counselee's human experience through the lens of Scripture and theology.
- 3) For the student to gain hands-on experience in the core competencies of counseling, such as data gathering, discerning root heart issues, interpreting stories through the lens of the work of Christ and other Scriptural principles, and the assigning of growth projects.

COURSE MATERIALS

Books

Dunkle, Elena and Claire B. Dunkle. *Elena Vanishing: A Memoir*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2015.

This book is an autobiography of one young woman's struggle with anorexia over a decade. DO NOT READ THIS BOOK AHEAD OF TIME. Doing so will negatively impact your ability to grow as a counselor through this course. We will be working through this book together over the first half of this course to gain skills in exegeting human experience. I've picked this book in particular because she writes with clarity regarding her internal commitments as well as external actions.

As a disclaimer, Elena doesn't think, talk, or act like a Christian. There are sections of this book that ugly to read. However, her story is never voyeuristic or sensualized. The narrative Elena tells is not unlike things you

will encounter as a counselor. The ability to interact with the realities produced by living darkness and rebellion against God is a critical competency for a biblical counselor. If your conscience objects to reading this work, please contact the professor to discuss an alternative work.

Kim, Matthew D. and Daniel L. Wong. *Finding Our Voice: A Vision for Asian North American Preaching*. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2020. Chapters 1-4.

A key competency for biblical counselors is to be able to get inside the experience of their counselees: What is it like being them? This grows our compassion and increases our effectiveness in bringing the word to bear on their life . Chapters 1-4 of this book present a description of the unique cultural emphases and challenges of being an Asian North American that most of us have not experienced. Pay attention to the way culture shapes the troubles, values, and questions experienced by ANAs.

Koukl, Greg. *Tactics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

An evangelism book in a counseling practicum class? Yes – and here’s why. Koukl lays forth a method for drawing people’s ideas and functional beliefs out in a masterful way. So much of counseling is knowing what to ask to get the heart of a person’s struggles. When he says “evangelism,” just substitute the word “counseling” and you’ll see its usefulness.

Whitman, Lauren. *A Biblical Counseling Process*. Greensboro: New Growth, 2021.

One question asked by every new counselor is, “Well, how do I actually put into practice the theory I’ve learned?” Enter Lauren Whitman’s book. Whitman walks through the practical skills of how to run and pace counseling sessions.

Lieblich, Julia and Esad Boskailo. *Wounded I Am More Awake: Finding Meaning After Terror*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012.

Boskailo is a Bosniak survivor of Serbian concentration camps. He’s also a psychiatrist. This work is a moving tale, and one that highlights well some of the complexities and nuances of caring for survivors of trauma. This book obviously doesn’t share many of our biblical counseling presuppositions, but there’s much we can learn from it. Pay attention to the way Boskailo connects with fellow survivors. Watch how people react in certain situations. Take note of how meaning is so central to their recovery.

Articles

1. How Healthy is Your Preparation? JBC 14.3, page 2-5: David Powlison (4 pp)
2. How Does Scripture Change You? JBC 26.2, pages 26-32: David Powlison (7 pp)
3. Walking the Razor’s Edge of Truth and Love in Personal Ministry JBC 22.1, 57-69: Timothy Lane (13 pp)

All articles are available on Canvas.

COURSE WORK

1. Reading

Read the above materials and report the percentage read using the reading report worksheet on Canvas.

2. *Elena Vanishing* case studies.

Students will read *Elena Vanishing* according to the reading schedule attached below. **Students must not read ahead in the book**, as reading ahead will destroy the integrity of this long-form case study.

This long-form case study will focus on developing skills regarding interpreting life events and an individual's interpretation of their reality. Each week, students will complete the corresponding *Elena Vanishing* assignment, available on Canvas. Completed assignments are to be uploaded to Canvas before the beginning of class. Students must also bring a copy of their completed assignment to class, either in printed or electronic form.

3. Reading Response Paper

Write a 2 page (double spaced) response paper to *Finding Our Voice* chapters 1-4 **OR** *Wounded I Am More Awake*. You are to explore one of the following two questions:

- How do the life experiences described in this book vary from my own, and what impact might this have on someone's perceptions and troubles in life?
- What have I learned from reading this work in terms of how to care for someone from a different section of humanity than me?

Do not:

- Write a stream of consciousness paper
- Write a summary of the book
- Evaluate the claims of the book

Get into the meat of the experiences described in this book and wrestle through the tough questions that this brings up.

4. Practice Counseling

Students will be divided into groups of three for simulated counseling sessions. Each group will also have an experienced counseling mentor attached, who will lead the discussion after each session. Students will play the role of counselor, counselee, and an observer each class period.

Three separate cases will be counseled. The first will be a five-session traditional counseling scenario with a PDI. The second will simulate a one session "pop-by" meeting, where there is no PDI and no ability to prepare. The third will be an emergency or crisis situation.

For the first scenario, students will fill out a PDI for a particular case they would like to counsel. This PDI will be given to the student they are counseling, who will adopt that persona for the sessions. While the details of each case should be determined by the counselor (i.e. the one who is filling out the PDI), the main presenting problem must be from the following list:

- Fear, Worry, Anxiety
- Pornography
- Same-Sex Attraction
- Depression
- Anger
- Rejection
- Guilt

Do not write this case study about yourself (as you would then be counseling someone who is role-playing you...which is really weird). Also, **the case study you write must have the subject be a Christian.** Otherwise, you will get bogged down in trying to convert a fictitious person.

5. Attendance

As a lab course, attendance is of the highest importance. **Students are expected to arrive on time to every class meeting without fail.** Failure to do so will not only harm your growth in this course, but also the growth of your classmates. **Every unexcused absence will reduce the student's overall grade by one full letter.** (I.e. a student set to receive a B+ who misses one class would receive a C+). Absences that have not be discussed in advanced with the professor will not be excused short of dire medical emergency. The professor reserves full right to decline to excuse proposed absences should the reason be of an insufficient weight (i.e. missing class to attend your neighbor's dog's birthday party). **Tardiness will likewise have a significant negative impact upon a student's grade.**

6. Counseling Review

Students are to record their own practice counseling session #2. Students are to have listened to their audio file and completed the self-evaluation sheet available on Canvas before the beginning of session #3. Students will likewise record session #4 and complete the self-evaluation worksheet available on Canvas. Students must provide their own recording equipment (smartphone apps are readily available).

7. Reflection Paper

Write a 4-page double spaced reflection paper on how this class has helped you grow as a counselor. Identify both ways you've seen yourself develop and weaknesses that you want to continue working on as you transition to Practicum II/III.

COURSE GRADING

Course grades are according to the following percentages.

Reading	15%
Reading Response Paper	10%
Elena Vanishing Case Studies	20%
Practice Counseling	35%
Counseling Reviews	10%
Reflection Paper	10%

*One full letter grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence

Grading Scale:

Standard RTS Scale

NUTS AND BOLTS

Special Needs

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course.

Disclaimer

During the course of the semester the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary to the professor because of events and circumstances that occur during the term.

Classroom Policies

1. All classroom policies at RTS Charlotte are expected to be followed.
2. Papers should be submitted in Chicago/Turabian style.
3. Students are required to cite all sources consulted for a written assignment. Students who plagiarize or cheat in any other manner are guilty of academic misconduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students. This will result in disciplinary action up to and including failure of the course and academic dismissal.

Please also adhere to the following RTS internet usage protocol:

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving

cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

Schedule

*Please note that the course schedule is subject to change at the prerogative of the professor.

Date	Topics	Assignments Due
02/03	Introduction & Interpreting Human Experience I	
02/10	Interpreting Human Experience II	<i>Elena 1-6, Elena Worksheet I (64pp)</i>
02/17	Where Do I Start?	<i>Elena 7-10, Elena Worksheet II (60pp)</i>
02/24	Where Do I Go?	<i>Elena 11-13, Elena Worksheet III (44pp)</i>
03/03	Speaking & Listening	<i>Elena 14-17, Elena Worksheet IV (59pp)</i>
03/10	Interpreting Human Experience III	<i>Elena 18-Afterward, Elena Worksheet V (58pp)</i> Turn in Role-Play PDI.
03/17	Spring Break	
03/24	Various Topics	Reading Response Paper
03/31	Practice Counseling: Session 1	
04/07	Practice Counseling: Session 2	Record Session #2 in-class <i>A Biblical Counseling Process Due</i>
04/14	Practice Counseling: Session 3	Listen to recording and submit self-reflection
04/21	Practice Counseling: Session 4	Record session #4 in-class <i>Tactics Due</i>
04/28	Practice Counseling: Pop-By	Listen to recording and submit self-reflection
05/05	Practice Counseling: Emergency	
05/12	Finals Week	Submit Course Reflection Paper

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MACC Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Practicum I
 Professor: Dr. Nathanael Brooks
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Spring 2021

<u>MACC Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MACC 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.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
<u>COUNSELING KNOWLEDGE</u> Demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and modern anthropology.	Moderate	Course emphasizes the application and practice of communicating counseling knowledge on an understandable level to counselees.
<u>COUNSELING SKILL</u> Ability to apply biblical truths and common-grace insights in a variety of counseling settings.	Strong	Students actively counsel and are evaluated based upon their counseling skill. Emphasis is placed upon growth as a counselor.
<u>SCRIPTURE</u> Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.	Strong	Scripture is essential to the counseling done by students in the classroom setting.
<u>REFORMED THEOLOGY</u> Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.	Moderate	Reformed theology is the framework through which counsel and care is expressed.
<u>SANCTIFICATION</u> Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	This course functions more as a laboratory class than an instruction-based course. Students can expect to grow in humility and skill as they grow as counselors.
<u>WINSOMELY REFORMED</u> Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos.	Moderate	Reformed theology is the framework through which counsel and care is expressed.