



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

CO 575 Premarital Counseling
January, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Due West, S.C.
January Semester 2012
Toney C. Parks, D. Min

Office (864) 379-6693; Cell (864) 350-8409; Home (864)-268-2199 before 10 p.m.
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Office Hours: Please call to schedule appointments
ETS FAX (864) 379-3171; P. O. Box 668, Due West, SC 29639
[McCain Library](#) (toll free) 1-877-876-4348

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The student is exposed to a variety of components essential for the preparation of the couple for marriage. The student gains familiarity with inventories, personal profiles, family-of-origin instruments, and standardized tests. Church marriage policy, a marriage coordinator's program, group preparation, the writing of a marriage ceremony, and marriage etiquette are explored. *Required for M.A.C.M. students. Three hours.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary (ETS) is to prepare students to serve in the Christian Church in faithfulness to the Bible, the Reformed tradition, and the standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, while showing respect for denominational diversity. One of the seminary's goals is to teach students to address Christian people at the points of their deepest needs, listening attentively, strengthening them through regular pastoral care, and counseling those with special problems. As part of the education, Erskine intends to help students learn to prepare for Christian marriage. It is hoped that students will develop and make progress in the following areas:

- a. Understanding the Biblical structure for Christian marriage.
- b. Understanding the concepts of family and individual dynamics.
- c. Developing skills for education of couples.
- d. Developing skills of exhortation, convictions, and interventions with couples.
- e. Understanding and being able to use various instruments for the evaluation of couples.

- f. Developing insights into the dynamics of the progress and the content of counseling as directed by the Holy Spirit.
- g. Developing an ability to use the Word of God in the education and advising of couples.
- h. Gaining the ability to prepare and direct the marriage ceremony.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Kostenberger, Andreas J., and David W. Jones. *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004. Lectures will be adapted from various chapters of this book. (ISBN: 13:978-58134-580-3)

Wright, Norman J. *Premarital Counseling Handbook*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1992. (ISBN: 978-080243821)

SUGGESTED READING

Eyrich, Howard A. *Three to get Ready: A Premarital Counseling Manual*, 2nd ed. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 1996.

Parks, Toney C. "A Biblical Counseling Format for Couples Contemplating Marriage in the African American Community." D. Min Project. Westminster Theological Seminary: 2002 (A Guide to use as you develop your pre-marital counseling format) in Erskine Library.

Course Schedule

January 7 th	Historical Data and Background information on each couple Orientation: Introduction to Premarital Counseling Theology and Biblical Overview of Marriage Biblical Review of Divorce and Remarriage Biblical Review of Divorce and Remarriage
January 14 th	Premarital Counseling Discussion Topics Marriage and a Covenant, Sacrament or Contract Biblical Principles and Scriptures references of Vows Premarital Counseling Format and tools
January 21 st	Premarital Marital Counseling Manual Format (Approval) Develop a Wedding Ceremony Describing Each Liturgical Component in the ceremony Discuss Resources Used to Prepare Couples for Marriage
January 21 st	Premarital Counseling Presentations:

You are required to present your counseling manual to the class as if you were conducting group counseling or a premarital counseling seminar.

Your work will be graded on course content, tools and resources used in the presentation. Your presentation style and knowledge will be evaluated during the presentation.

You are expected to use power point slides in your presentation. The length of each presentation will be determined by the number of students enrolled in the class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. Read the assigned material for each class. You are to familiarize yourself with the various concepts, terms and techniques used to conduct premarital counseling in the local church. Selected terms will be given during each lecture; you will be expected to know terms and understand the concept. An essay or vocabulary quiz may be given at the end of each lecture. **10 Points**
2. Write a 2-3 page paper articulating your theological understanding of marriage. **20 Points** (Due January 14th) Please post your work online.
3. Write a 2-3 page paper articulating your theological understanding of divorce and remarriage. **20 Points** (Due January 21st) Please post your work online
4. Develop a “Premarital Counseling Outline” to be used as a ministry tool in your denominational setting. This outline will be the basis for your course manual. You will need to pay close attention to the first lecture. **20 Points** (Due January 21st) Please post your work online.
5. Develop a wedding ceremony describing each liturgical component with a descriptive explanation of its significance after each section. An example will be given in class. Assignment must be done as instructed. **20 Points** (Due January 21st) Please post your work online.
6. Develop a marriage program/manual. You are to include all the necessary information from the beginning to the end of the premarital counseling process. You will be evaluated on content, format and the extent of the application. Your Premarital Counseling Manual/Program must be presented in power point format. Your presentation is to be 15 minutes maximum with a 10 to 15 page with power point presentation. **5 Points** (Due January 21st)

7. Counseling manuals are to be your own work; please do not reproduce material from the internet. You are welcome to get ideas; the work is expected to be developed by you to be used in your ministry. **25 points** (Due January 28th)
8. You are expected to attend all classes; assignments are to be posted on time. Please do not enroll in the class if you are unable to attend each session.

ERSKINE SEMINARY POLICIES

Required Textbooks

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

LATE WORK GRADING POLICY:

Work Turned in Late: Work turned in after the due date will be accepted, but you will not receive full credit.

Work not submitted on the due date will be graded accordingly; work that is turned in the next week will receive no higher than grade B. Work submitted within the second week will receive no higher than grade C. Work submitted after the beginning of the third week will receive no higher than D.

Grading Scale:

100-95 A	83-80 C
94-93 A-	79-78 C-
92-91 B+	77-76 D+
90-88 B	75-72 D
87-86 B-	71-70 D-
85-84 C+	69-0 F

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