



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

CO 575 Premarital Counseling
Fall 2010, 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Tuesday
Toney C. Parks, D. Min

Office Hours: Please call to schedule appointments.
Office (864) 379-6693; Cell (864) 350-8409; Home (864)-268-2199 before 10 p.m.
E-mail: parks@erskine.edu;
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. Understand the Biblical structure for Christian marriage.
- b. Understand the concepts of family and individual dynamics.
- c. Develop skills for education of couples.
- d. Develop skills of exhortation, convictions, and interventions with couples.
- e. Understand and be able to use various instruments for the evaluation of couples.
- f. Develop insights into the dynamics of the progress and the content of counseling as directed by the Holy Spirit.
- g. Develop an ability to use the Word of God in the education and advising of couples.
- h. Gain the ability to prepare and direct the marriage ceremony.

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

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

SUGGESTED READING

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 ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

1. Read the assigned material for each class. You are to familiarize yourself with the various concepts, vocabulary and techniques used to conduct premarital counseling in the local church.
2. Write a 2-3 page paper articulating your theological understanding of divorce and remarriage. (September 14th) 20 points
3. 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. (October 19th) 20 points
4. Develop a wedding ceremony describing each liturgical component with a descriptive explanation of its significance. (October 26th) 20 points
5. Marriage program/manual to be followed from beginning to end. 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 PowerPoint format. Your presentation is to be 15 minutes maximum with a 10 to 15 slide presentation. (Due November 30th & December 7th) 40 points
6. Please do not reproduce material from the internet. You are welcome to gather ideas from other documents and resources; however, you are expected to document resources used in your manual.

Course Schedule

August 31 st	Orientation: Introduction to Premarital Counseling
September 7 th	Theology and Biblical Overview of Marriage
September 14 th	Biblical Review of Divorce and Remarriage
September 21 st	Developing Historical and Background Data of a Couple
September 28 th	Premarital Counseling Discussion Topics
October 5 th	Discuss the Wedding as a Covenant and the Significance of Vows
October 12 th	Review Wedding Vows and Scripture References
October 19 th	Develop a Premarital Counseling Manual Outline (due online) (Must be submitted for approval)
October 26 th	Develop a Wedding Ceremony Describing Each Liturgical Component in the ceremony
November 2 nd	Discuss Resources Used to Prepare Couples for Marriage
November 9 th	Lecture: Norman Wright Manual for Premarital Counseling
November 16 th	Lecture: Norman Wright Manual for Premarital Counseling
November 23 rd	Thanksgiving Holiday Break
November 30 th	Manual Presentations/Class Participation
December 7 th	Manual Presentations/Class Participation

ERSKINE SEMINARY POLICIES

Drop/Add/ and Course Withdrawal: Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a “drop/add” form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student’s receiving a grade of “F” for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Office Hours

My normal office hours are printed in this syllabus. However, due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, I strongly recommend that you call or e-mail to schedule an appointment.

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.

Language about God and Humanity

Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church’s historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

Conduct in Theological Discussions

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

Incompletes

The grade of “I” or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of “I” is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An “I” in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become “F.”

Official Seminary Class Attendance Policy:

Class participation is considered an important part of the total educational experience at Erskine Seminary. Students are expected to attend classes on a regular basis and are responsible for the mastery of all materials required in the course. Each professor will indicate in writing the specific class attendance policy at the beginning of each course. In general, students are allowed up to three hours of unexcused absence without penalty. Students wishing to take a course which meets four times over the semester **must** attend the first meeting of the course.

Policy Regarding Absences (SAMPLE FOR 13-SESSION CLASSES)

Students are required to attend all class sessions. If students have to be absent for any reason, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses more than three class sessions for any reason will automatically fail the course.

Policy Regarding Absences (SAMPLE FOR 4-SESSION CLASSES)

Students are required to attend all class sessions. Students wishing to take a course which meets four times over the semester **must** attend the first meeting of the course. Students who cannot attend the first course meeting should not register for the course or, if already registered, should drop the course and complete the drop/add form. (If the drop/add form is not completed and turned in to the Registrar, the student will still be charged for the course and will receive an “F” grade.) If students have to be absent for part or all of another class meeting day, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses as much as one full class day or its equivalent in late arrival or early departure should consult with the professor to see whether it is still possible to pass the course.

Style and Bibliographical Formatting Requirements (SAMPLE)

All papers must be typed/processed (12-point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the “Style and Form Standards” (Erskine

Seminary). In this course, footnotes and a bibliography are required in each paper. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted towards page requirements.

Exegesis Credit Policy for Bible Elective/Exegesis Course Syllabi

Students intending to use this course to fulfill their Old or New Testament exegesis requirement, must choose a passage and do a thorough exegetical study, using the exegetical procedure taught in the Principles of Exegesis course. Such students, then, must have successfully completed BI 502 Principles of Exegesis and, for those who began in Fall 2008 or after, BI 503 Introduction to the Biblical Languages prior to taking any course for exegesis credit. Additionally, students who are required to take the Biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) must, in place of BI 503 Introduction to the Biblical Languages, successfully complete the respective language courses (Hebrew I & II for Old Testament courses; Greek I & II for New Testament courses) prior to taking any Bible course for exegesis credit. Students taking Bible electives without having met the exegesis and language course prerequisites may only count those courses as general Bible electives, and cannot receive exegesis credit for them.

Chapel Attendance Policy (FOR TUESDAY-THURSDAY ON-CAMPUS CLASSES)

All morning and afternoon on-campus classes (except for Friday and Saturday courses) carry a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the catalog for the specifics of the chapel attendance policy. There is a per chapel fee if you attend fewer chapels than required.

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS

If your course contains a paper or project required as a portfolio submission, star or highlight the project and inform students it is their responsibility to submit the graded and polished document to the appropriate administrative person for filing in their portfolio.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. As the following statement indicates, plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and the integrity of the Christian community:

Plagiarism injures the community by inhibiting the recognition and cultivation of gifts imparted by the Spirit. Clearly unattributed use of the words and/or ideas of others fails to give appreciative recognition of their gifts. But this illegitimate appropriation of the gifts of others also blocks the recognition and cultivation of the actual gifts of the person engaged in plagiarism.

Plagiarism creates an atmosphere of falsehood in the community's discernment and cultivation of gifts, both within the Christian community and in God's larger creation. Since freedom comes only by way of truth (Jn. 8:32), such falsehood

can only result in captivity, and therefore has no place in the Christian community.

On this basis, the Seminary adheres to the following general requirements for the acknowledgement of sources of academic work. These requirements apply to both print and electronic media.

- 1. Quotations. Any sentence or phrase that a student uses from another source must be placed in quotation marks or, in the case of longer quotations, clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Any quotation must be accompanied (either within the text or in a note) by a precise indication of the source.*
- 2. Paraphrasing. Any material that is paraphrased or summarized must also be specifically acknowledged in a note or in the text.*
- 3. Ideas. Specific ideas that are borrowed should be acknowledged in a note or in the text, even if the idea has been further elaborated by the student.*
- 4. Bibliography. All the sources consulted in the preparation of an essay or report should be listed in a bibliography.*

In addition to plagiarism, the following related practices are also unacceptable compromises of the truth requisite to a free community:

- 1. Multiple submission. Failure to obtain prior written permission of the relevant instructors to submit work which has been submitted in identical or similar form in fulfillment of any other academic requirement at any institution.*
- 2. False citation. The deliberate attribution to, or citation of, a source from which the material in question was not, in fact, obtained.*
- 3. Submission of work done by someone else, either with or without that person's knowledge. Neither ignorance of the regulations concerning academic violations nor personal extenuating circumstances are an adequate defense against charges of plagiarism. The Seminary's provisions for "due process" apply in cases of alleged plagiarism.*

[The italicized statement above is used by permission of The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, based upon a document adapted by LTSP, with permission, from "Princeton University Rights, Rules and Responsibilities," 1990 Edition. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.]

For details refer to the Erskine Seminary Handbook under the Honor Code.

NOTE: Under no circumstances will the professor accept a paper containing others' work, either downloaded from Internet sites or used from other students'

papers. (In other words, the purpose of the assignment is for the student to reflect critically on the topic at hand and to articulate those reflections in writing.) If the student turns in such a paper to the professor, the grade is an automatic “F” or “0”. As in scholarly writing, the student may quote from a reference work using proper citations. The student may also reference others’ work in the student’s own wording but must give proper credit by citing the original source. (See Turabian for instructions on footnotes, parenthetical references, citations, reference lists, and bibliographies.)

If the student is a published author and chooses to cite from his/her copyrighted material, proper citations must be made as well. Not to do so is considered plagiarism.