

# Providence Theological Seminary

## Integration of Theology & Psychology

CP 5105C Course Syllabus, Calgary Campus

Professor: Rev. Rob MacDonald, MA

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course explores and critically examines various theories of integration of psychology and theology on three levels of discourse; conceptually, clinically, and personally. Issues such as sin and psychopathology, human concept and God concept, religious experience and faith development, the nature of self, psychotherapy and spiritual direction etc. will be considered from both perspectives along with the psychological and spiritual issues counselors bring to the healing process.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Examine and reflect critically on various theories and models of integration conceptually, clinically, and personally.
- Examine and reflect critically on various formulations of the “self” and/or “soul” and how our understanding of these terms informs our practices of counseling or therapy.
- Develop critical awareness of and sensitivity to the psychological and theological dimensions of the narrative of suffering and be able to provide care in a manner that draws resources from psychology, theology, and spirituality.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Benner, David (2004). *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*. IVP:IL

McMinn, Mark and Campbell, Clark. (2007) *Integrative Psychotherapy*. IVP:IL

Entwistle, David N. (2004). *Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity*.

Wipf & Stock: OR

Nolasco, Rodolfo. (2011) *The Contemplative Counsellor: A Way of Being*. Fortress Press: MN

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Read assigned sections of the text and come prepared to participate in all classroom activities.
2. **In Class Presentation** on the application of McMinn’s *Integrative Psychotherapy* model on a particular case vignette. Topics to be presented include the following:
  - a. Assessment and Case Conceptualization Chapter 5
  - b. Understanding & Applying Symptom Focused Interventions Chapter 6-7
  - c. Understanding & Applying Schema-Focused Interventions Chapter 8-9
  - d. Understanding & Applying Relationship-Focused Interventions Chapter 10-11

**Presentation starts on February 23, 2012**

3. Write a 10-15 page essay on one's evolving "**personal philosophy of integration of theology and psychology**" that can be used as a grid or template in **a) conducting research, b) professional practice of counseling/psychotherapy, and c) devotional life**. The essay must include critical analysis, appropriation, and expansion of David Entwistle's *"Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity"*, and Nolasco's *Contemplative Counsellor*. Be sure to lay out clearly your epistemology (ways of knowing), cosmology (understanding of the world), and philosophical anthropology (nature of humanity) that will undergird your philosophy of integration.

This preliminary essay must be seen as a "work-in-progress." That is, it will be subjected to numerous revisions in the future as you engage new materials and experience new realities that point to the inescapable need for critical integration of these two disciplines.

**DUE: March 24, 2012**

4. Write a 15-20 pg **integration paper** on any topic of interest that can be explored from the hermeneutical perspectives of psychology and theology. Possible topics for exploration: sin or mental illness, shame and guilt, forgiveness, self-denial, theory of change or healing, soul care, theological anthropology, prayer, rituals, and the like.

Consider the following:

- What does theology say about the issue? Aspects of the issue theology failed to address.
- What does psychology say about the issue? Aspects of the issue psychology failed to address.
- How can each discipline amplify, elaborate, expand the other?
- If brought together in conversation with each other to come to bear on the topic explored, what "new synthesis, insights, revelation, knowledge" can be drawn from the integrative work?

**DUE: April 7, 2012**

**Grading**

Class Participation	10 marks
In-Class Presentation	20 marks
Philosophy of Integration	35 marks
Integration Essay	<u>35 marks</u>
	100 marks

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- ❑ All counseling students must use the APA format for citing resources. ([http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/apa\\_index.htm](http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/apa_index.htm)). Other students should follow the guidelines of Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Terms Papers, Theses, and Dissertation, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, or those set forth by the seminary.
- ❑ **Papers are due on the DATE they are DUE.** Any paper submitted after the due date will incur a *1 pt deduction* for every single day it is turned in late.
- ❑ All papers must be **e-mailed** as an attachment to [rob.mac@sasktel.net](mailto:rob.mac@sasktel.net) on the date they are due.

## READING SCHEDULE

Entwistle, David N. (2004). *Integrative Approaches to Psychology and Christianity*.  
Be prepared to discuss in class questions stated below.

### **February 21 Chapter 2 & 3**

*Class Discussion: Discuss varieties of church backgrounds from which each student come, how psychology is viewed in these backgrounds, and try to discern patterns of reactions to psychology in terms of historical and theological origins of their denominations.*

### **February 22 Chapter 4 & 5**

*Class Discussion: Determine basic contours of a Christian worldview. What are some of the culturally based assumptions that we hold that may need to be reformed by a Christian worldview?*

*Discuss the advantages and limitations of various ways of knowing. Discuss how certain we can be that our beliefs are correct.*

### **February 23 Chapter 6 & 7**

*Class Discussion: The author pointed out that every psychologist and every theologian grounds his or her psychology or theology in a philosophical system, whether or not it is explicitly articulated or carefully considered; every psychological and every theology is done from an antecedent worldview perspective. Do you consciously attend to the way that your philosophical assumptions and worldview shapes your psychological and theological positions? How can you become more aware of these assumptions?*

*What are some of the implications of a philosophical anthropology that views human nature from a bio-psycho-social perspective combined with theological view of humans as limited creatures, image bearers, and fallen natures?*

### **February 24 Chapter 8 to 10**

*Class Discussion: The author claimed that “God gave birth to the subject of psychology (human behavior) when he created human beings. God granted us the foundations of theology when he gave us His word. Since both psychology and theology are his subjects, the book of his works and the book of his word respectively, they reflect larger truths that are held in His hand. While our perception of those truths is imperfect, the truths themselves are ultimately unified...Psychology and theology rightly understood, are thus seen as allies, both of which are subjects of One Sovereign God.” How is this paradigm different from the other four paradigms?*

*The author ended the chapter by noting that “those with whom we disagree often have things to teach us” and issued a challenge to “ask ourselves what is to be learned and appreciated from” those with whom we disagree. Identify at two things that you appreciate or can learn from the “Enemies, Spies, Colonialists, Neutral Parties, Allies as Subjects of One Sovereign” models of integration.*

### **February 25 Chapter 11 to 13**

*Class Discussion: How would you go about trying to discern whether the book of God’s word or the book of God’s works provided more clarity on a given issue? Why is it hard to live with ambiguity and uncertainty when a clear resolution is not obvious or quickly apparent?*

*Discuss how integration is similar to life-long immersion into another culture by which one becomes bilingual and multi-cultural. How does one do this without becoming syncretistic? Is there a danger that integration, if done poorly or without care, can simply become a form of syncretism? How do we guard against this?*