

Marriage Counselling



LECTURER

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TUTOR

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CANVAS & CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Canvas is an online learning platform that will host your course. Students are expected to watch the assigned video lectures, complete readings and submit assignments as listed in this syllabus for assessment, and participate in small groups.

SUPPORT

For help with common problems, please see 'Technical information and troubleshooting' within the Student Orientation material on your Canvas dashboard.

If you cannot resolve your difficulty, please contact Biblical Counselling UK Course Administration – courses@bcuk.org.

SHARING & COPYRIGHT PERMISSIONS

All materials provided in this course, including the course syllabus, assignments, articles, and video/audio lectures, are provided based on your enrollment in the course. Students may not reproduce or share any of these materials without the prior permission of BCUK.

Course Objectives & Learning Goals

This course introduces Marriage Counselling as a complex, dynamic, and yet rewarding form of counselling. This course will provide you with a basic theological framework and methodology for counselling that will help move couples beyond and beneath complaints to address dynamics, heart movements, and interpersonal patterns.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Engage a robust theology of marriage, divorce, and remarriage to build a secure foundation for marriage ministry
- Identify key dynamics that prevent couples from engaging fruitfully and safely in marriage counselling
- Investigate what goes wrong in marriage and learn how to work helpfully with struggling couples
- Track destructive conflict patterns and probe underneath into heart desires, fears, and hidden doubts
- Develop specific marriage counselling skills in both conjoint and individual marriage counselling
- Reflect personally upon and apply conflict patterns to close relationships

Course Required Reading

BOOKS TO PURCHASE

- *Married for God: Making Your Marriage the Best It Can Be* by Christopher Ash
Crossway, 2016
- *Preparing Couples for Love and Marriage: A Pastor's Resource* by Cameron Lee and James L. Furrow, Abingdon Press, 2013
- *Faithful: A Theology of Sex* by Beth Felker Jones, Zondervan, 2015
- *Domestic Abuse: Recognize, Respond, Rescue* by Darby Strickland, P&R Publishing, 2018
- *Solving the Moment: A Collaborative Couple Therapy Manual* by Dan Wile & Dorothy Kaufmann, Self-published, 2021

OTHER READINGS

- Other readings will be provided in Canvas

Course Outline

<p>WEEK ONE</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 1: Marriage in Scripture(41min) Lecture 2: One-Flesh Union (32min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Prompts by Unit Ash, <i>Married for God</i>, Preface, Introduction, chs. 1–4 Sironi, “What My Father Has Joined” Sironi, “Song of Songs: A Very Good Marriage” <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post Your Introduction in Workplace Reading Prompts by Unit Confirmation
<p>WEEK TWO</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 3: Theology of Marriage–Purpose (52min) Lecture 4: Theology of Marriage–Covenant (42min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Ash, Married for God</i>, chs. 5–8, conclusion <p>ATTEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation Session 1 <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small Group Meeting Reflection #1 Response Paper 1
<p>WEEK THREE</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecture 5: Premarital Counselling Structure (25min) Lecture 6: Premarital Preparation Conversation with Cameron Lee, PhD (42min) Lecture 7: Key Components to Premarital Counselling (34min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lee & Furrow, <i>Preparing Couples for Love & Marriage</i>, Introduction, chs. 1–12 <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendix A (Complete before Small Group Meeting 2) Small Group Meeting Reflection #2

<p>WEEK FOUR</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 8: Discernment–The 4 A’s of Marital Assessment (21min) • Lecture 9: Discernment–Ambivalence about Commitment (41min) • Lecture 10: Addictions & Affairs (35min) <p>READ</p> <p>Winston Smith, “<i>When Not To Do Marriage Counselling</i>” JBC article</p>
<p>WEEK FIVE</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 11: Conflict in Scripture (43min) • Lecture 12: The Powers at Play in Conflict (30min) • Lecture 13: Fight Patterns & Styles (37min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sironi & Whitman, “Helping a Spouse Who Withdraws During Conflict” • Sironi & Whitman, “Helping a Spouse Who Moves Against during Marital Conflict” • Sironi & Whitman, “Helping Spouses Move Toward Each Other in Conflict” • Sironi, “From Your Heart...Forgive” <p>BEGIN WORK ON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Paper 2
<p>WEEK SIX</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 14: Microskills of Conjoint Counselling (44min) • Lecture 15: Basic Microskills (32min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wile & Kaufman, <i>Solving the Moment</i>, Foreward, chs. 1–4 <p>ATTEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation Session 2 <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Group Meeting Reflection #3 • Response Paper 2

<p>WEEK SEVEN</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 16: Abuse in Marriage (43min) • Lecture 17: Evaluating Abusive Marriages (33min) • Lecture 18: Change in Abusive Marriage (28min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strickland, <i>Domestic Abuse: Recognize, Respond, Rescue</i> • Strickland, "Uncovering Sexual Abuse in Marriage" • Jones, <i>Faithful: A Theology of Sex</i>, Introduction, chs. 1-4 • Review Duluth Wheels <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Paper 3
<p>WEEK EIGHT</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 19: Divorce in Scripture (46min) • Lecture 20: Helping Couples Considering Divorce (47min) • Lecture 21: Separation (12min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wile & Kaufman, <i>Solving the Moment</i>, chs. 5–9 <p>ATTEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation Session 3
<p>WEEK NINE</p>	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 22: Collaborative Marriage Counselling (45min) • Lecture 23: Doubling (23min) • Lecture 24: The Importance of Sexual Intimacy (11min) • Lecture 25: Addressing Sexual Intimacy (53min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Solving the Moment</i>, chs. 10-18 • <i>Faithful: A Theology of Sex</i>, chs. 5-8 <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Group Meeting Reflection #4

WEEK TEN	<p>WATCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture 26: Marriage Counselling with One Spouse (33min) • Lecture 27: Disadvantages of Counselling One Spouse (48min) <p>READ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sironi & Whitman, "Marriage Counselling with Only One Spouse" <p>SUBMIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project <p>OPTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Quiz
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Assignment Expectations

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation will consist of both ungraded, optional elements and required, graded elements to enrich your experience:

PARTICIPATION GRADE

This course includes four small group meetings scheduled throughout the term, each of which must last for a minimum of one hour. These meetings provide an opportunity to interact with the conceptual, personal, relational, and ministerial implications of the lectures and reading material. After each small group, you will submit a 150-250 word reflection on the content of the group time.

There are also three Observation Sessions during the term where students will interact with videos of couple counselling taking place. The participation grade is based both on your small group reflections and your involvement in the Observation Sessions. Please see the Small Group and Observation Session instructions in Canvas for more information

RESPONSE PAPERS

There are 3 response papers on assigned readings. Students should engage with relevant course materials prior to writing the papers. For more details, please see the response paper guidelines in Canvas. The goal for these papers is to provide an opportunity to think through the issues involved in marriage counselling and their application.

FINAL PROJECT

You will select a couple in your community (one whose marriage is neither nearly "flawless" nor deeply distressed) and spend at least an hour with them. You will follow the guidelines in Canvas for meeting with them and completing the assignment. After meeting with them, you will write a paper of 800-1000 words describing your experience. Please do NOT wait until the end of the term to find a couple who are willing to meet with you because it can be difficult to identify a suitable couple who are happy to do this.

OPTIONAL FINAL QUIZ

There is an optional final quiz that can serve as a helpful revision exercise to help cement your learning.

COURSE OUTLINE

Please take time to review the course outline for the term and note expectations. Note that additional materials or instructions may be listed in the course modules in Canvas. Please use the information in Canvas if there is a conflict between the information provided in this syllabus and Canvas.

Course Grading & Policies

ASSIGNMENT WEIGHTING

Assignment Name	Weight
Participation grade	20%
Response Paper 1	15%
Response Paper 2	15%
Response Paper 3	15%
Final Project	35%

GRADING

There are two main reasons for providing grades for your work. The first is to provide some feedback about how you have done. We trust it helps to have a sense of the standard of your work and changes that may happen over time. The second purpose is to provide some measure of accountability. Taking a course for credit challenges you to put in the time and effort needed to produce good quality thinking and work. All of our lives and all our ministry depends upon growing wisdom. We trust getting grades is one way of helping encourage us toward the effort that is needed for that growth.

Yet grading brings dangers too – it can foster a sense of competitiveness or a fear of failure. So do be praying for godly attitudes. It may help to remember that humility and a willingness to admit ignorance and a desire to grow in knowledge, wisdom, and love (James 1:5; Matt. 5:3) are hallmarks of authentic faith.

In many ways grading is simply a means of helping you maintain the ambitions that led you to register in the first place.

GRADE SCHEME TABLE

Grade Letter	Percentage Score	Grade Definition	
A	85% – 100%	Excellent to Outstanding	PASS
A-	70%-84%		
B+	66% – 69%	Good to Very Good	
B	63% - 65%		
B-	60%- 62%		
C+	55% – 59%	Satisfactory	
C	50% - 54%		
C-	40% – 49%	Sufficient	
D	35% – 39%	Unsatisfactory	FAIL
E	30% - 34%		
F	0 – 29%	Unsatisfactory	

LETTER GRADE REFERENCE TABLE

Letter Grade and Grade Summary	A	B	C	D–F
	You added dimensions to your work that went above the required assignment.	You successfully fulfilled the requirements of the assignment.	You missed some important aspects of the assignment.	You did not fulfill some or all of the assignment requirements.
Discussion	Discussion is insightful, thorough, and interesting.	Discussion is interesting.	Discussion is interesting but lacks depth.	Discussion is uninteresting and/or too shallow for the assignment.
Understanding	Demonstrates thorough understanding of the material.	Demonstrates fair understanding of the material.	Demonstrates partial understanding of the material.	Demonstrates lack of understanding.
Application	Applies several key concepts from course resources to personal observations and experiences.	Applies at least one key concept from course resources to personal observations and experiences.	Implies key concepts, but doesn't make clear link to course resources.	Does not apply course concepts.
Grammar, Mechanics, Spelling, & Structure	Clear writing with no grammar or spelling errors.	Clear writing with minimal grammar or spelling errors.	Multiple grammar or spelling errors. Mechanics get in the way of clarity.	Numerous spelling or grammar errors. Difficult to read.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments that are late will have 10 points deducted for every day that they are late and will be graded “0” after one week.

REQUESTS FOR EXTENSIONS

Policies: Please refer to the BC UK Student Handbook (available in the Course Information section on Canvas) regarding policies for granting late assignments and extensions.

1. Extensions will not be granted for holidays or previously planned events.
2. **To request an extension for up to 7 days**, contact your Grader through the Canvas platform, if possible 48 hours before the deadline, stating the reason for your extension request and how long an extension you are asking for.
3. **To request an extension longer than 7 days**, email courses@bcuk.org stating:
 1. The course you are taking and your Grader
 2. The assignment for which you are requesting an extension
 3. The due date for this paper or project
 4. The reason for your extension requestCourse administration will respond within two working days of your request and inform your Grader.

Course Administration

The Student Handbook details policies, procedures, and administration of the Certificate Programme, and information that is relevant to all courses, including grading standards and academic policies.

You can find the Student Handbook in the Course Resources section of the course in Canvas.