Counselling Embodied Souls

Syllabus

Information 2
Course Objectives 3
Required Reading 3
Course Schedule 4
Counselling Conversations 7
Assignments 7
Grading and Course Administration 9

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Information

Lecturer	Andrew Collins, Director of Counselling Ministry, BCUK
Grader	You will be assigned a Grader from Biblical Counselling UK who will grade your assignments and respond to questions you have about them. You can contact your Grader through your Canvas inbox. Your Grader will contact you at the start of term to let you know the days during the week where he or she will be available to respond to your email inquiries.
Tutor Cafés	There are three Tutor Cafés in this course, in weeks 2, 4 and 8. In each of those weeks Andrew Collins will offer an evening and an alternative daytime session in which he will give reflections on the Counselling Observation videos in the course, and give students opportunities to discuss any of the other elements of the course. Tutor Cafés are optional, but students are encouraged to attend them in order to benefit from the interaction with an experienced tutor and with other students. The Zoom link will be posted in Canvas, and you are free to attend whichever time suits you best.
Administration	For queries about course access, withdrawals, and extensions over 7 days, please contact Biblical Counselling UK Course Administration – courses@bcuk.org
Canvas	Canvas hosts your course materials (videos, audio files, course documents) and enables you to communicate with your Grader and the other students in your class. Assignments should always be submitted through Canvas.
Technical Queries	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.
Course Programme	You are expected to watch the assigned videos, listen to the set audio(s) and complete the reading assigned each week, and submit the assignments listed in this syllabus.
Sharing & Copyright	All materials provided to you for this course through Canvas are copyrighted by BCUK or other publishers, to whom we pay a fee for their use. This includes, but is not limited to, the course syllabus, notebook, assignments, articles, and video/audio lectures. You may not reproduce or share any of these materials without prior permission from Biblical Counselling UK. As an exception to this policy, CCEF allows BCUK students to share up to 10 copies of *Journal of Biblical Counseling (JBC)* articles from the course for use in their personal ministry. Examples of this would include sharing an article with a person you are walking with, spouse, friend or small group. This is strictly limited to *JBC* articles. If you wish to share a *JBC* resource with more than 10 people, you will need to make an application via the permissions page on the CCEF website. You are welcome to share links to blog posts that are in the public domain.

Course Objectives

Our understanding of the human body impacts many areas of life and ministry today. *Counselling Embodied Souls* will equip students to understand a practical theology of the embodied person which will cover common physical struggles. The course will also teach both counselling and practical skills that will help students grow in wise Christ-centred ministry to embodied souls.

The aims of the course

- To understand and articulate body-soul anthropology and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a range of biblical understandings of the whole person
- To understand our own embodied discipleship and practise active engagement of our bodies in following Christ
- To be equipped with an approach to counselling ministry that is grounded in a biblical body-soul anthropology and is attentive to the influence and activity of the body
- To be equipped with skills for counselling ministry that exhibit discernment of bodily and spiritual issues and minister to those with body-based problems with wise care that is attentive to the influence and activity of the body
- To articulate the relevance of scripture for embodied struggles
- To understand common body-based problems and be able to minister with wise care and an attentiveness to church context

The course begins with consideration of cultural influences on our understanding of the body and moves to a biblical and theological understanding including implications for discipleship as embodied believers. A ministry model based on the body-heart unity and interaction is then outlined and forms a basis for the rest of the course. We then move to a focus on embodied struggles, starting with basic problems like fatigue and pain, through to complex struggles like mental health problems and psychosomatic illness. The course concludes with discussion of sickness, healing and death.

Required Reading

Books

- *Blame it on the Brain?*, Edward T Welch (P&R Publishing, 1998)
- *You're Only Human*, Kelly M Kapic (Brazos Press, 2022)
- *Descriptions and Prescriptions*, Michael R Emlet (New Growth Press, 2017)
- **One** of the following:

  Strangers to Ourselves – Rachel Aviv (Vintage, 2024)
  Rejoicing In Lament, J Todd Billings (Baker, 2015)
  Disrupted Journey, Nate Brooks (P&R Publishing, 2025)
  Where Is the Mango Princess? Cathy Crimmins (Knopf Doubleday, 2001)
  The Deep Places, Ross Douthat (Convergent Books, 2021)
  The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, Mark Haddon (Vintage, 2014)
  Same Lake Different Boat, Stephanie Hubach (P&R Publishing, 2006)
  With the End in Mind – Kathryn Mannix (William Collins, 2022)

Journal articles

All articles are provided in Canvas

- Michael R Emlet, "A Biblical Rationale for Embodied Spiritual Practices" (*JBC,* 38:2, 2024)
- Karl B Hood, "The Benefits of Singing" (*JBC,* 38:2, 2024)
- Esther Smith "Searching for Healing: How to Counsel Individuals with Debilitating Chronic Pain", *JBC,* 31:2, 2017
- Helen Thorne-Allenson, "Viewing the Menopause through a Biblical Lens" (*Journal of Interpersonal Ministry* #1, 2025, pp35-44)
- Todd Stryd, "'Take a Deep Breath' — How Counseling Ministry Addresses the Body" (*JBC,* 32:3, 2018)

Blog posts

- "The Psychological Does not Exist", Ed Welch, CCEF 14 April 2026
- "Glorifying God with Our Bodies Isn't About What We Don't Do", David Mathis, TGC 9 August 2025
- "4 Challenges of living with chronic illness", Roché Brook, BCUK 10 April 2024

Course Schedule

Week One	Watch • Welcome • Lecture 1: Introduction • Lecture 2: Understanding our Assumptions • Counselling Observation #1 Listen • CCEF Podcast: We are embodied souls shapes by a world of influences Submit • Self-Reflection • Prompt notes for week 1
Week Two	Watch • Lecture 3a: Created Body and Soul, a Systematic Theology • Lecture 3b: How do Body and Heart Interact? • Lecture 4: Skills for Knowing Embodied Souls • Counselling Observation #2 Read • *Blame it on the Brain,* Ed Welch, Chapters 1-3 • Blog article: The Psychological does Not Exist, Ed Welch Submit • Prompt notes for week 2

Week Three	Watch • Lecture 5a: A Biblical Theology of the Body I • Lecture 5b: A Biblical Theology of the Body II • Lecture 6: Embodied Discipleship – Following the Lord as a Whole Person • Counselling Observation #3 Listen • Catherine Haddow audio: "Use of body-based approaches in biblical counselling" Read • *You're Only Human,* Kelly Kapic, Chapters 1-5 • *JBC* article*:* A Biblical Rationale for Embodied Spiritual Practices, Mike Emlet • Blog article: Glorifying God with Our Bodies Isn't About What We Don't Do, David Mathis Submit • Prompt notes for week 3
Week Four	Watch • Lecture 7: Sleep and Finitude • Lecture 8: Fatigue • Counselling Observation #4 Read • *You're Only Human,* Kelly Kapic, Chapters 6-10 • *JBC* article*:* The Benefits of Singing, Karl hood • Blog article: 4 challenges of living with chronic illness, Roché Brook Submit • Prompt notes for week 4
Week Five	Watch • Lecture 9: Pain - When the Body Hurts • Lecture 10: Pleasure, Addiction and the Body Read • *Blame it on the Brain,* Ed Welch, Chapters 9-10 • Start your reading of choice • *JBC* article: Searching for Healing: How to Counsel Individuals with Debilitating Chronic Pain, Esther Smith Submit • Counselling Reflection 2 • Prompt notes for week 5

Week Six	Watch • Lecture 11: Ageing • Lecture 12: Neurodiversity Listen • Audio: Hannah - “Parenting and Neurodiversity” Read • *Blame it on the Brain,* Ed Welch, Chapters 6-8 • Continue your reading of choice • *JIM* article: Viewing the Menopause through a Biblical Lens, Helen Thorne-Allenson Submit • Prompt notes for week 6
Week Seven	Watch • Lecture 13: Mental Illness and the Body • Lecture 14: Mental Illness and Medication Read • *Descriptions and Prescriptions*, Mike Emlet Submit • Counselling Reflection 3 • Prompt notes for week 7
Week Eight	Watch • Lecture 15: When the Body Looks Like the Heart • Lecture 16: Ministry when the Body Looks Like the Heart Listen • Audio: Heinrich and Irene Barth, “A personal story of brain injury” Read • *Blame it on the Brain,* Ed Welch, Chapter 5 • *JBC* article, “Take a Deep Breath” - How Counseling Ministry Addresses the Body, Todd Stryd Submit • Prompt notes for week 8

Week Nine	Watch • Lecture 17: Psychosomatic Problems • Lecture 18: Sickness and Healing Listen • "Illness Identities", Steve Midgley (BCUK 2026 National Conference seminar) Read • Finish your reading of choice Submit • Praying for your Counsellee • Prompt notes for week 9
Week Ten	Watch • Lecture 19: Later Ageing and Dementia • Lecture 20: Hope in Life and Death • Read • *Blame it on the Brain,* Ed Welch, Chapter 4 Submit • Final Paper

Counselling Conversations

To give opportunity for students to apply the understanding of the person as an embodied soul presented in the course and explore how this affects ministry, students are to arrange to have 3-4 counselling conversations across the 10 weeks of the course with someone with an embodied struggle – for example, a chronic physical condition, a more acute illness, a condition related to ageing, or a significant but stable chronic mental health problem. Detailed instructions are provided in Canvas.

You will reflect on your Counselling Conversations in your three Counselling Reflection assignments.

Assignments

Full instructions for assignments are provided in Canvas. The following is a summary:

Weekly prompt notes

A weekly brief reflection (150 word max) on the content you have studied that week. This can be in note form and is marked for completion only. These will form helpful notes to return to in your final paper.

Self Reflection Paper

You will reflect on embodied discipleship and on how heart presuppositions might shape ministry to others. (800 words)

Counselling Reflection Assignments

You will record and upload to Canvas three short (5 minutes max) audio Counselling Reflections. These are designed to simulate the experience of verbally presenting a counselling case in a supervision session. You will prepare bullet-point prompts to use to record your audio (you are not to write a full script), which you will also upload to Canvas.

Praying for your Counsellee

You will record and upload to Canvas a prayer for their Counsellee, as if they were praying with them at the end of the last session you had with them.

Final Paper

The final paper is a summarising reflection on your counselling sessions and the course content, using your weekly content reflections to review material and making connections between the material, your counselling and daily life. (1500-1800 words)

Assignment Weighting

Self Reflection Paper	10%
Counselling Reflection Assignments (15% each)	45%
Praying for your Counsellee	10%
Final Project	35%

Grading and Course Administration

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

Small revisions have been made to the grade scheme this academic year:

<table>
<tr><th>Grade Letter</th><th>Percentage Score</th><th colspan="2">Grade Definition</th><th>Degree Class (rough guide for comparison)</th></tr>
<tr><td>A+</td><td>86-100</td><td>Work of a publishable quality</td><td rowspan="8">PASS</td><td>First</td></tr>
<tr><td>A</td><td>76-85%</td><td rowspan="2">Excellent to Outstanding</td><td rowspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>A-</td><td>70%-75%</td></tr>
<tr><td>B+</td><td>66% – 69%</td><td rowspan="3">Good to Very Good</td><td rowspan="3">Upper Second 2:1</td></tr>
<tr><td>B</td><td>63% - 65%</td></tr>
<tr><td>B-</td><td>60%- 62%</td></tr>
<tr><td>C+</td><td>55% – 59%</td><td rowspan="2">Satisfactory</td><td rowspan="2">Lower Second 2:2</td></tr>
<tr><td>C</td><td>50% - 54%</td></tr>
<tr><td>C-</td><td>40% – 49%</td><td>Sufficient</td><td>Third 3</td></tr>
<tr><td>D</td><td>35-35%</td><td rowspan="3">Unsatisfactory</td><td rowspan="3">FAIL</td><td rowspan="3">FAIL</td></tr>
<tr><td>E</td><td>30-34%</td></tr>
<tr><td>F</td><td>0% – 39%</td></tr>
</table>

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

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:
    - The course you are taking and your Grader
    - The assignment for which you are requesting an extension
    - The due date for this paper or project
    - The reason for your extension request

    Course 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.