

PSYC9401 - Psychological & Counseling Approaches to Social Problems
Ph.D. Seminar
Spring Semester 2015
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I. Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

II. Seminar Description and Core Value

In this seminar, psychological and counseling principles and techniques are applied to the process of understanding and alleviating social problems. Institutions and agencies working specifically in the areas of study are surveyed. Students will conduct substantial research to delineate psychological and counseling processes of change to social problems. Throughout this course students will be encouraged to consider how the core value of *spiritual vitality* impacts their work with individuals suffering with mental, emotional, and relational health problems.

III. Learning Objectives

The student who satisfactorily completes this course by fulfillment of the requirements should be able to:

- A. Describe the major social problems in the United States and their relationship with counseling and mental health issues.
- B. Pursue an ongoing integration of biblical concepts related to social problems into one's personal framework for conducting therapy and personal ministry, as well as an understanding of current research concerning social issues in counseling.
- C. Articulate a personal philosophy of addressing social issues in our communities.
- D. Describe demographics, prevalence, and key factors related to social problems and their impact on clients seen in counseling.
- E. Identify various resources and agencies available to assist clients with various social problems.

IV. Required Texts:

Stearns, Richard. 2010. *The Hole in Our Gospel*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Cannon, Mae Elise. 2009. *Social Justice Handbook: Small steps for a Better World*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Optional Texts:

Johnson, Abby, and Cindy Lambert. 2010 *Unplanned*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Sider, Ronald. 2005. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Greer, Peter, and Phil Smith. 2009. *The Poor Will Be Glad: Joining the Revolution to Lift the World out of Poverty*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Stafford, Wess. 2007. *Too Small to Ignore: Why the Least of These Matters Most*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Smith, Wesley. 2006. *Forced Exit: Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and the New Duty to Die*. New York, NY: Encounter Books.

Clark, Jerusha, with Dr. Earl Hensin. 2007. *Inside a Cutter's Mind: Understanding and Helping those Who Self-Injure*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Jones, Stanton, and Mark A. Yarhouse. 2007. *Ex-Gays?* Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Mooney, Linda A., David Knox, and Caroline Schacht. 2007. *Understanding Social Problems*, 5th ed, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, Inc.

Fensterbusch, Kurt. 2006. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Social Issues*. 14th ed. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Companies.

V. Course Requirements:

1. Students are required to participate in discussion boards presented in Blackboard.
2. Research Project and Presentations. Students will select a social issue and complete an in depth investigation of the problem. The project will be completed and submitted in three parts. In addition to the written portion of the project, students will prepare a 45-60 minute presentation of the material for each seminar meeting. Students may request addition presentation time in advance if necessary.

Part one will consist of a detailed explanation of the social issue including statistics, demographic information, connection to mental illness, ramifications (personal, family, and community), proposed and attempted solutions, and an overview of various related points of view. Part 1 should be 7-10 pages in length.

Part two will address the issue from a Biblical perspective. Students should include an in depth exploration of Scripture – including principles, commands, and character sketches. In addition, part two will include a discussion of how the church currently

addresses or fails to address the issue, suggestions for how the church could engage the problem, and identification of ways the student can personally address the issue as a Christian (not professional). This part should be 7-10 pages in length.

Part three addresses the issue from a counseling perspective. Students will prepare a resource guide for the selected social problem. The guide will include identification and descriptions of organizations connected to providing support or help with the social problem, an annotated bibliography of at least 10 related books, websites and other relevant helps, and brief summaries of counseling approaches used to help those struggling with the problem.

3. Students will select one book to read, review, and present for each seminar meeting (3 total). The book may come from the suggested readings for the course, but students are not limited to the books on the syllabus. The requirements for selected books are as follows: a book not previously read by the student, at least one hundred pages in length, addresses a social problem, not chosen by another classmate. Each of the three books needs to address a different social issue. Thus, by the end of the course you will have read on three separate issues. The book review should be typed and address the following: brief summary of the book, areas of agreement with the author, areas of disagreement, would you recommend this book to others?, if so, who? Book selections and reviews will be posted on blackboard under the discussion board thread for “book reviews” so that other students may access this as a resource. Presentations of the books should be brief but thorough.

Seminar Schedule:

Jan. 19-23

Seminar Overview:
Review the syllabus & order your text books

Blackboard: Each student will need to provide three definitions for “social problems” – the sources of these definitions should be identified. By the end of the week, students should review the definitions posted and develop a personal definition of “social problems”. These should all be posted on the week 1 discussion board.

Jan. 26-30

Blackboard: Each student will develop a “Top 10 Social Problems” list and post it on the week 2 discussion board.

Feb. 2-Feb. 6

Blackboard: Students will each adopt one social problem to investigate during the semester. Topics will be assigned on a first come basis beginning **Jan. 31**. Students will post their selected topic on the week 3 discussion board. Topics cannot be duplicated and are subject to approval by the professor.

Once a topic has been approved by the professor, students should begin researching the selected topic. Research should include but not be limited to a thorough explanation of the social problem, prevalence, who it impacts, statistics related to the problem, and attempted or possible solutions.

Interviews: Students will select 3 people to interview who are connected in some way to the selected social problem. The interviewee may be personally involved in the problem, have a family member who is involved, work with a population involved or impacted by the problem, or be directly connected in another way. The interview questions should be designed to help inform the student about the problem from a personal perspective. Interview questions and answers should be turned in at the first seminar meeting. Results from the interviews may be worked into Part 1 of the paper. Video or audio clips from the interviews may be incorporated into the class presentation with proper permission from the interviewee.

Feb. 7-13 **Paper:** Students will utilize their research findings by writing a 3 part paper detailing the information learned on the chosen social problem.

Presentation: Students will prepare a 45-60 minute presentation on the selected social problem. The presentation may include Power Point, multi-media clips, handouts, interviews, or any other appropriate elements necessary for best communicating the dimensions of the social problem. Students may request longer presentation time in advance if desired.

Feb. 14-20

Seminar Meeting - Feb. 17 & 18

Due: Part 1- Social Issues Paper & Presentation

**Book Review and Presentation of selected book on social problem
(post on blackboard prior to class meeting)**

Interviews Results (questions & answers – can be written or video recorded)

Feb.21-27 **Paper:** Begin working on part two of the paper. This section will focus on the spiritual implication of the social issue. Part two will address the issue from a Biblical perspective. Include an in depth exploration of Scripture – including principles, commands, and character sketches. In addition, part two will include a discussion of how the church currently addresses or fails to address the issue, suggestions for how the church could engage the problem, and identification of ways the student can personally address the issue as a Christian (not professional). This part should be 7-10 pages in length.

Book Review: Select a book to read, review, and report on. Be sure to post the selection on the discussion board so classmates will not duplicate.

Feb. 28-March 6

Keep working on the research paper and reading a book to review.

March 7- 13

Keep working on the research paper

Write your book review and presentation (not due until the seminar meeting)

March 14-20 SPRING BREAK**March 21-27**

Presentation: Prepare a 45-60 minute presentation on the spiritual implications for the selected social problem. The presentation may include Power Point, multi-media clips, handouts, interviews, or any other appropriate elements necessary for best communicating the dimensions of the biblical implications and directives related to the social problem. Students may request longer presentation time in advance if desired.

March 28-April 4

Seminar Meeting – March 31 – April 1

Due: Part 2 – Social Issues Paper & Presentation

**Book Review and Presentation of selected book on social problem
(post on blackboard prior to class meeting)**

April 4-10

Paper: Begin working on part three or your research. This portion addresses the issue from a counseling perspective. Students will prepare a resource guide for the selected social problem. The guide will include identification and descriptions of organizations connected to providing support or help with the social problem, an annotated bibliography of at least 10 related books, journal articles, websites and other relevant helps, and brief summaries of counseling approaches used to help those struggling with the problem.

Book Review: Select a book to read, review, and report on. Be sure to post the selection on the discussion board so classmates will not duplicate.

April 11-17

Keep working on the research paper and reading a book to review.

April 18-24 Keep working on the research paper

Write your book review and presentation (not due until the seminar meeting)

April 25- May 1

Presentation: Prepare a 45-60 minute presentation on the resources you identified and the counseling approaches used to address the selected social problem. The presentation may include Power Point, multi-media clips, handouts, interviews, or any other appropriate elements necessary for best communicating the dimensions of resources and approaches related to the social problem. Students may request longer presentation time in advance if desired.

May 2-8

Seminar Meeting – May 5-6

Due: Part 3 – Social Issues Paper & Presentation

**Book Review and Presentation of selected book on social problem
(post on blackboard prior to class meeting)**

Academic Honesty Policy

All graduate and undergraduate NOBTS students, whether on-campus, Internet, or extension center students, are expected to adhere to the highest Christian standard of honesty and integrity when completing academic assignments for all courses in every delivery system format. The Bible provides our standard for academic integrity and honesty. This standard applies whether a student is taking tests, quizzes, exams, writing papers, completing Discussion Boards, or any other course requirement.

Netiquette

Appropriate Online Behavior. Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online on Discussion Boards or whenever interaction occurs through web, digital, or other electronic medium. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity is expected at all times in the online environment.

Bibliography

- Cannon, Mae Elise. (2009). *Social Justice Handbook: Small steps for a Better World*. Inter-Varsity Press.
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- Sider, Ronald. (2005). *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Thomas Nelson.
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- Vernick, Leslie. (2007). *The Emotionally Destructive Relationship: Stopping It, Surviving It*. Harvest House Publishing.

