



**The REACH Program of
Trinity International University**

PSY 383R
Marital Counseling

Student's Manual 1.2

“Let marriage be held in honor among all.”
Hebrews 13:4

**2065 Half Day Road
Deerfield, IL 60015
847-317-6500
www.tiu.edu/reach**

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I. Course Description

A survey of various theoretical and methodological approaches to marital counseling. A particular emphasis is given to assessment strategies, problem diagnosis, and intervention techniques. Prerequisite: PSY 140 R. *Three hours.*

II. Course Overview

Many couples are struggling in their marriages. In addition to finding that four out of every five adults (78%) have been married at least once, a recent Barna study revealed that an even higher proportion of born again Christians (84%) tie the knot. That eclipses the proportion among people aligned with non-Christian faiths (74%) and among atheists and agnostics (65%). The study showed that the percentage of adults who have been married and divorced varies from segment to segment. For instance, the groups with the most prolific experience of marriage ending in divorce are adults with a lower socioeconomic status (39%), Baby Boomers (38%), those aligned with a non-Christian faith (38%), African-Americans (36%), and people who consider themselves to be liberal on social and political matters (37%).

Divorce is not only becoming the norm in families, it is becoming the expected. George Barna noted that Americans have grown comfortable with divorce as a natural part of life.

"There no longer seems to be much of a stigma attached to divorce; it is now seen as an unavoidable rite of passage," the researcher indicated. "Interviews with young adults suggest that they want their initial marriage to last, but are not particularly optimistic about that possibility. There is also evidence that many young people are moving toward embracing the idea of serial marriage, in which a person gets married two or three times, seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life." Seeing these trends, marriage counseling will not only be dealing with the marriage at hand, but most likely other experiences from past marriages.

This course consists of six four-hour sessions. Each session will consist of lecture, facilitated discussions, and group activities. Videos will be used to further enhance student understanding. Before each session, the student is required to complete both reading and written assignments. During each session, the instructor will take the students through each of the four mainstream books on marriage. The instructor will integrate Christian theories and ideas into each model. Using parts of Worthington's "Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling" book, students will learn and practice various marriage counseling interventions.

The first session will give an introduction to issues in marriage counseling from both a secular and Christian perspective. Session two will cover basic interventions. Session three will discuss the core vision of marriage. Communication and forgiveness will be taught in session four. Session five will consist of the topic of sexual intimacy. Session six will consist of closure, presentations, and final discussions.

Gary Thomas challenges us with the question, “What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?” Not only is our goal to fix marriages but to help people become who God wants them to be within the crucible of marriage. In order to do that, this course will help apply counseling theories into today’s modern marriages. By helping the marriages around them, people will be aiding the community by building stronger families and a hope for the future.

III. Course Materials

- a. Chapman, G. (2008). *Desperate marriages: moving toward hope and healing in your relationship*. Chicago: Northfield. ISBN#:978-0-8024-7552-7
- b. Collins, G.R. (2007). *Christian counseling: a comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). Thomas Nelson. ISBN# 9-781-4185-0329-1.
- c. Collins, G.R. (2007). *Christian counseling casebook*. Thomas Nelson. ISBN# 978-1-4185-1660-4.
- d. Parrot, L. & Parrot, L. (2002). *The love list: eight little things that make a big difference in your marriage*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- e. Thomas, G. (2000). *Sacred marriage: what if God designed marriage to make us holy more than make us happy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- f. Worthington, E. (2005) *Hope-focused marriage counseling: a guide to brief therapy*. Intervarsity Press. ISBN# 0-8308-2764-1
- g. The Bible (preferably the ESV – or the NASB, RSV, NRSV, or NIV)

IV. Course Policies

1. APA Documentation

All written work (e.g. worksheets/essay questions, reflection papers, final projects, etc.) in the REACH Program must conform to the APA parenthetical notation style. This includes:

- an APA title page (including a running header and page number)
- an “Abstract” page with a 1-2 paragraph summary of your paper (an abstract is only necessary for your Applied Learning Papers, but not for your smaller assignments)
- In-text citations (with author(s), date, and page number (if applicable))
Note Well: Even discussion board postings and PowerPoint presentations, for example, must use in-text citations when you cite another person’s work or ideas.
- a “References” page (it is not called a “bibliography”)
- one inch margins
- 12 point font
- double spaced

Failure to use and cite others’ work or ideas properly will lead to charges of academic dishonesty. See below for more information.

2. Academic Integrity

As a member of the Trinity community, we ask you to hold yourself and others to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Violations take many forms, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism: Using another's work or ideas without proper documentation, which requires citing the author or authors' name(s), date of publication, and page number (if applicable).
- Cheating: Using notes, books, or crib sheets during closed-book quizzes or exams, or copying from another student's work.
- Submitting Previous Work: Submitting your work that was previously turned in for credit.
- Ghosting: Writing a paper or taking a quiz (or any other evaluation) in place of another student.
- Aiding and Abetting: Helping others to commit acts of academic dishonesty, or failing to report those who have or plan to commit dishonest acts.

Faculty members will investigate all violations of academic integrity, whether deliberate or non-deliberate. If a violation is confirmed, the student may receive an "F" for the assignment and the course. In such a case, the student may not drop the course. The faculty member will document the case of dishonesty, explaining the incident and the action taken. The Associate Dean will receive a copy of this report, and a copy will be placed in the student's file. In serious cases of academic dishonesty, the Associate Dean may choose to meet with the student and faculty member to review the case. Multiple violations may lead to a student's dismissal from the program.

3. Late Work

All assignments must be turned in on or before the date they are due. Any assignment turned in late will be deducted as follows:

- a. 10% off for up to 24 hours late
- b. 20% off for up to 48 hours late
- c. assignments more than two days late will receive a zero

An extension on the time needed to submit final course requirements (such as the ALP) will be granted only in unusual circumstances and if the instructor and the Associate Dean grant the request.

4. Attendance Policy

Because of the accelerated and collaborative nature of the REACH courses, students are required to attend every class session. Missing a single class means a significant portion of contact with the instructor and the learning community has been lost.

For face-to-face courses, students missing one class session will be penalized between one-half and one full letter grade. Students missing two class sessions will receive an "F" for the course. Any student missing more than 30 minutes of a course session will be considered absent for the full course session.

For online courses, students must participate actively in class discussions and activities. Failure to do so will result in a grade reduction of one-half to a full letter grade at the discretion of the instructor.

5. Basic Writing and Speaking Proficiency

The REACH Program expects you to maintain basic standards of writing and speaking proficiency. If you believe you need support in one or both areas, please contact your academic advisor.

V. Course Outcomes

“At the end of this course, the students will be able to...”

1. Demonstrate understanding of theories of marriage counseling and apply them to cases.
2. Compare and contrast Christian marriage counseling theories and methods versus mainstream marriage counseling theories.
3. Examine and evaluate common marriage problems from a Christian perspective and apply appropriate theoretical models.
4. Identify and list the conditions that promote or limit optimal human functioning for couples, in order to promote change.
5. Design intervention case plans for several core marriage problems.
6. Analyze and explain personality characteristics, self-awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for working effectively with clients from diverse backgrounds and identities.
7. Implement legal, ethical, multicultural, and Christian-based principles within the marriage counseling environment.

VI. Course Requirements

1. Worksheets (10 at 50 points each) = 500 points
2. Applied Learning Paper = 300 points
3. Participation: 200 points

Total Points = 1000

VII. Grading Scale

Your final course grade will be based on the total number of points that you earn throughout the course:

Percentage	Grade
92-100	A
90-91	A-
88-89	B+
82-87	B
80-81	B-
78-79	C+
72-77	C
70-71	C-
68-69	D+
62-67	D
60-61	D-
0-59	F

VIII. Course Schedule

Session One Overview

Outcomes for Session One

At the end of this session, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze the link between hope and marriage success.
2. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the signs of a desperate marriage.
3. Compare and contrast the basic tenets of hope-focused marriage counseling vs. traditional marriage counseling.
4. Appraise the recent advances in Christian marriage counseling.

Assignments Due for Session One

1. Read Worthington Introduction and chapters 1-3.
2. Read Thomas chapter 1.
3. Read Chapman Introduction and chapters 1-2.
4. Read Parrot Introduction.
5. Complete Worthington Worksheet #1.
6. Complete Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #1.

Session Two Overview

Outcomes for Session Two

At the end of this session, the student will be able to:

1. Differentiate between pre-counseling interventions and initial interventions.
2. Appraise the concept of “divine romance.”
3. Critique the idea of a *core vision* in marriage counseling.
4. Analyze the source of common marriage problems.

Assignments Due for Session Two

1. Read Worthington chapters 4-6, 16.
2. Read Thomas chapter 2-3.
3. Read Chapman 3-4.
4. Read Parrot chapters 1-3.
5. Read Collins chapter 29.
6. Complete Worthington Worksheet #2.
7. Complete Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #2.

Session Three Overview

Outcomes for Session Three

At the end of this session, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the capacity to revise a couple's core vision.
2. Analyze one's own biases toward various core values that may differ from one's own.
3. Compare and contrast the sexual health of a married couple who prays versus a couple who does not include prayer.
4. Appraise behaviors and classify them into enabling behaviors vs. healthy behaviors.

Assignments Due for Session Three

1. Read Worthington chapters 7-8.
2. Read Thomas chapters 4-6.
3. Read Chapman chapters 5, 12, and 13.
4. Read Parrott chapters 4-5.
5. Complete Worthington Worksheet #3.
6. Complete Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #3.

Session Four Overview

Outcomes for Session Four

At the end of this session, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of confession and forgiveness.
2. Produce interventions for strengthening communication.
3. Analyze conflict management in one's own relationships.
4. Evaluate issues of communication in the student's relationship(s).

Assignments Due for Session Four

1. Read Worthington chapters 9-12.
2. Read Thomas chapters 7-9.
3. Read Chapman chapters 6-9.
4. Read Collins chapter 32.
5. Read Parrott chapters 7-8.
6. Complete Worthington Worksheet #4.
7. Complete Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #4.

Session Five Overview

Outcomes for Session Five

At the end of this session, the student will be able to:

1. Differentiate between interventions dealing with closeness and interventions for promoting commitment.
2. Identify and evaluate personal issues connected to the student's sexuality.
3. Apply theoretical approaches learned in class to specific client populations.
4. Integrate biblical truths with the topics of sexual abuse within marriage.

Assignments Due for Session Five

1. Read Worthington chapters 13-14.
2. Read Thomas chapters 10-12.
3. Read Chapman chapters 10-11.
4. Read Parrot chapter 6.
5. Complete Worthington Worksheet #5.
6. Complete Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #5.

Session Six Overview

Outcomes for Session Six

At the end of this session, the student will be able to:

1. Analyze case illustrations and execute a treatment plan.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the process of closure in marriage counseling.
3. Infer biblical truths to the concepts studied thus far.
4. Synthesize the main concepts studied in the course.

Assignments Due for Session Six

1. Read Worthington chapters 15-16.
2. Read Thomas chapter 13 and Epilogue.
3. Read Chapman chapter 14.
4. Read Parrot conclusion.
5. Complete the Applied Learning Paper.

IX. Course Documents

Note Well: For each session, your answers for both worksheets should not exceed seven pages.

Session One Documents

Worthington Worksheet #1

After reading Worthington Introduction, provide 2-3 paragraph responses to each of the following:

- Name and describe three of the advances in our understanding of marriage. How will these understandings help promote hope in marriage?

After reading Worthington chapter 1, provide 2-3 paragraph responses to each of the following:

- Compare and contrast hope-focused marriage counseling vs. traditional marriage counseling.

After reading Worthington chapter 2, provide 2-3 paragraph responses to each of the following:

- Name three ways to form a relationship with each partner.
- Describe three ways to plan a sensible counseling plan.

After reading Worthington chapter 3, provide 2-3 paragraph responses to each of the following:

- Name and describe the main causes of marital troubles according to Worthington. Explain a situation or a relationship where some of these dynamics came into play.
- Describe at least two ways in which to promote hope and explain how that is applicable in your own life.

Thomas/Chapman/Parrot Worksheet #1

After reading Thomas chapter 1, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- What is the difference between holiness and happiness? Explain how the concept of holiness is vital to marriage. Provide concrete examples from your own life where appropriate.

After reading Chapman Introduction and chapters 1-2, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Compare and contrast healthy marriages vs. desperate marriages. Explain a situation or a relationship where some of these dynamics came into play.

After reading Parrott introduction, ask your spouse (or another couple if you are not married or your spouse is unable) to take part in the activities and questions in the book for the next 5 weeks.

Session Two Documents

Worthington Worksheet #2

After reading Worthington chapter 4, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Briefly explain Worthington's "core vision." Explain how this information could be helpful in treating couples.

After reading Worthington chapter 5, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Analyze the idea of a "Precounseling video." Do you think it would be helpful to use this tool? Why or why not?

After reading Worthington chapter 6, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Briefly explain how you would use the material from chapter 6 to formulate an initial assessment.

After reading Worthington chapter 16, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Choose one of the essentials for hope-focused therapy. Briefly explain and analyze the method. Explain how this information could be helpful in your own life or in a counseling session.

Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #2

After reading Thomas chapters 2-3, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Provide your own definition of love (but do you simply list example of love). What do you think of the concept “learning to love?” What are some ways we can learn to love according to Thomas?

After reading Chapman chapters 3-4, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- What are some ways a spouse can understand his/her partner’s behavior? How can you relate this to your own life or another marriage?

After reading Parrott chapters 1-3, complete the activities outlined in the chapter. After each partner completes the assignment, come together as a couple or with the couple and provide responses to the following:

- All reflection questions on pages 31, 44, and 57.

Session Three Documents

Worthington Worksheet #3

After reading Worthington chapter 7, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- What are two of your main core values in relation to marriage? How might this affect your view as a marriage counselor?

After reading Worthington chapter 8, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- What are some factors that will help you determine a couple's core vision? How can this information help in the therapy process?

Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Casebook Worksheet #3

After reading Thomas chapters 4-6, complete the following:

- Briefly define Thomas' idea of "holy honor." What are some ways you can use these ideas in your own relationship(s)?
- How can prayer affect sex? What are some of the drawbacks of a prayer-less marriage?
- Thomas talks about the "sanctification and cleansing" of marriage. Describe these ideas in your own words. Include examples from your own relationship(s).

After reading Chapman chapters 5, 12, and 13, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Describe the needs of a workaholic. Analyze the steps to avoid confrontations.
- What are some examples of "enabling behavior?" Have you seen this in any of your own relationships or of those close to you?
- Briefly describe the three categories of a depressed spouse. Compare and contrast the doctor's role vs. the counselor's role.

After reading Parrott chapters 4 and 5, complete the activities outlined in the chapter. After each partner completes the assignment, come together as a couple or with the couple and provide responses to the following:

- All reflection questions on pages 70 and 87.

Session Four Documents

Worthington Worksheet #4

After reading Worthington chapter 9, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Choose one of the ways to promote confession and forgiveness. Briefly explain and analyze the method. Explain how this information could be helpful in your own life.

After reading Worthington chapter 10, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Critique three of the “interventions for strengthening communication.” How could these interventions be useful in your own relationship(s)?

After reading Worthington chapter 11-12, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Analyze three “interventions for aiding conflict resolution.” Describe how these interventions might help your own relationship(s).
- Do you agree with Worthington’s ideas about changing partner’s cognition? Why or why not?

Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Worksheet #4

After reading Thomas chapters 7-9, provide a 1-2 paragraph response to the following:

- What are some ways to build perseverance in marriage?
- Describe the concept of the “sacred struggle.” Have you experienced this in any of your relationships? If so, please describe.
- Define forgiveness. What are some ways to foster forgiveness?

After reading Chapman chapters 6-9, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Explain some of the issues that come up in a marriage with a controlling spouse, an uncommunicative spouse, and a verbally abusive spouse. According to Chapman, what are some ways to cope? Add your own thoughts as well.

After reading Parrott chapters 7 and 8, complete the activities outlined in the chapter. After each partner completes the assignment, come together as a couple or with the couple and provide responses to the following:

- All reflection questions on pages 110 and 121.

Session Five Documents

WORTHINGTON Worksheet #5

After reading Worthington chapter 13 and 14, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- List and explain three indicators of lack of closeness. Illustrate and explain how you have witnessed that personally.
- Describe interventions for promoting closeness and commitment.

Thomas/Chapman/Parrott Casebook Worksheet #5

After reading Thomas chapters 10-12, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- Outline and describe *the mark of a Christian marriage*. Illustrate and explain how you have witnessed that personally.

After reading Chapman chapters 10-11, provide a 2-3 paragraph response to the following:

- List and explain the biblical view of sexuality according to Thomas.

After reading Parrott chapters 6, complete the activities outlined in the chapter. *This activity is about sexual intimacy, so please address the issue with sensitivity and confidentiality*. After each partner completes the assignment, come together as a couple or with the couple and provide responses to the following:

- All reflection questions on pages 99.

Applied Learning Paper

Write a 10-12 page paper that outlines how you would counsel a couple with a problem/issue of your choosing. Please share your topic with your instructor before you start writing. The following outline is suggestive:

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

- a. Catch Reader's Attention
- b. Purpose Statement
- c. Outline of Paper

Marital Difficulty (1 to 2 pages)

- a. Description of the Issue
- b. Symptoms and Causes of the Issue

General Principles of Marriage (4 to 5 pages)

Note: Please integrate a Christian worldview.

Concrete Practices of Marriages (3 to 4 pages)

Note: Please integrate a Christian worldview.

References

X. Evaluation Forms

Instructor Evaluation for Written Work

Student's Name	Course Number	Assignment
		ALP

Specific Requirements	Percentage Distribution Determined by Instructor	Percentage Earned by Student	Instructor Comments		
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introductionⁱ and Conclusionⁱⁱ ▪ Section Titlesⁱⁱⁱ ▪ Section Introductions and Conclusions^{iv} ▪ Organizing Words, Phrases, and Sentences 	5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ 		
Research / Sources (pp. 91-102^v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Credibility (academic vs. non-academic). Please cite your course texts and at least one peer-reviewed journal article. ▪ Number of Supporting Viewpoints ▪ Primary Research 	10				
Discipline-Specific Knowledge/Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explanation (restate, define, describe, illustrate) ▪ Analysis (reasons, causes, effects, purposes)^{vi} ▪ Critique (agree, disagree, strengths, weaknesses) ▪ Synthesis of Existing Ideas and/or Theories 	25				
Discipline-Specific Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contextualization (individual, group, organization, sub-culture, culture, etc.) ▪ Recommendations (stop, start, continue, modify) ▪ Creation of New Ideas and/or Theories 	25				
Christian Worldview (and Other Worldviews) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of Scripture (interpretation and application) ▪ View of Scripture ▪ View of God ▪ View of Humanity ▪ View of Ethics 	25				
Documentation (pp. 155-195) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ APA Paper Format ▪ APA Title Page (with Header) & Abstract ▪ APA Integration of Sources^{vii} ▪ APA "References" Page 	5				
Composition (pp. 1-90) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity and Concision ▪ Grammar, Punctuation, and Mechanics ▪ Voice (Academic vs. Non-academic) ▪ Tone (Assertive vs. Passive or Aggressive) 	5				
	Total Possible	Total Percentage Earned by Student	Total Possible Points for Assignment	Total Points Earned	Final Grade for Assignment

100%		x 300	=	
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Explanatory Notes

¹ An effective introduction: (1) grabs attention through a quote(s), statement(s), statistic(s), question(s), and/or story, (2) states the thesis or claim (which needs to be clear, concise, arguable, & controversial (?)), and (3) previews/outlines the paper.

² An effective conclusion: (1) summarizes the paper and ties its main points together and (2) ends with final thought(s), question(s), quotation(s), warning(s), challenge(s), and/or action points.

³ Section titles are often as follows: Title of the Paper (not the word “Introduction”), Background or Organizational Context or..., (Main Sections of the Paper), and Conclusion.

⁴ Section introductions and conclusions are usually not necessary in shorter papers (e.g., 1-2 pages).

⁵ All page references refer to Hacker, D. (2008). *A pocket style manual* (5th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s.

⁶ Other categories for analysis include: assumptions, problems, solutions, and predictions.

⁷ There are three strategies for integrating sources into a paper: quotation, paraphrase, and summary.
