



Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
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BC1850 Biblical Marriage and Family Counseling Syllabus

Semester: Spring 2026

**Course: BC1850 Biblical Marriage and
Family Counseling**

Day & Time: Tuesday 7:30-9:30

Room: A201

Credits: 2

**Professors: Cheryl Blackmon, EdD, EdS
Howard Eyrich, DMin, MTh, MA**

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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to both the biblical data on marriage and family and the fundamentals of a biblical methodology for marriage and family counseling. In addition, the course will provide an overview of the systems theory approach to marital and family therapy.

Course Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Content
 - Define biblical marriage and family counseling.
 - Delineate the biblical concepts of marriage and family relationships and the nature of the biblical helping process.
 - Differentiate biblical counseling from secular counseling and a Christian integrationist perspective of marital counseling.
- Character
 - Value biblically based presuppositions and practices for marriage and family counseling.
 - Develop compassion for families whose relationships are disordered.
 - Provide hope for families who are caring for aging relatives.
- Competency
 - Articulate a biblical methodology enabling them to conduct a responsible biblical helping relationship.
 - Identify and analyze secular theories of marriage and family counseling.

Required Texts:

Three to Go: A Marriage and Family Counseling Primer
by Luciano Cozzi and Howard Eyrich
is available at the Briarwood Bookstore in digital form
<https://briarwood.org/webstore/product/three-to-go-2/>
This manual contains course material and weekly discussion guides.

Adams, Jay E. *Solving Marriage Problems: Biblical Solutions for Christian Counselors*, MI: Grand Rapids, 1983. (122 pages)

Beard, Lori and Alison Simmons. *Hope and Help: A Counseling Process from Beginning to End*, West Chester, PA, 2024. (98 pages)

Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (CCEF). *On Marriage Counseling*, Glenside, PA: 2022. (140 pages)

Eyrich, Howard. *Thirty-Seven Strategies for Making Marriage Joyful: Bringing God Glory in the Way you Treat Your Spouse*, Cedar Park, TX: Illumine Press, 2023. (108 pages)

Eyrich, Howard and Cheryl Blackmon. *After an Affair: Rebuilding Your Trust, Rebuilding Your Marriage*, Hoover, AL: Growth Advantage Communication, LLC, 2018. (68 pages)

Harvey, Dave. *When Sinners Say "I Do": Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage*, Wapwallopen, PA: 2007. (183 pages)

Newheiser, Jim. *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage: Critical Questions and Answers*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017. (294 pages)

Collateral or Recommended Texts:

Adams, Jay E. *The Case of the "Hopeless" Marriage: A Nouthetic Counseling Case from Beginning to End*, Stanley, NC: 2006.

*Deal, Ron L. *Preparing to Blend: The Couple's Guide to Becoming a Smart Stepfamily*, Minneapolis, MN: 2023.

*Written from an integrationist perspective, but informs biblical counselors about important topics in today's world

Fitzpatrick, Elise. *Helper by Design: God's Perfect Plan for Women in Marriage*, Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003.

Keller, Timothy, and Kathy Keller. *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*, New York: Riverhead Books, 2011.

Piper, John. *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence*, Minneapolis, MN: 2009.

Priolo, Lou. *The Complete Husband: A Practical Guide for Improved Biblical Husbanding*, Phillipsburg: P&F Publishing, 2017.

Tripp, Paul David. *Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021.

Course Requirements and Assessments:

Note: Each project must be turned in with a title page that includes the Project Number and Project details. Assignments should be completed as WORD documents (NOT PDF). Email Projects to Dr. Blackmon; email the Final Exam to Dr. Eyrich.

Students are expected to complete all textbook reading assignments. This contributes to fulfilling all class objectives. This is also necessary to navigate exams. NOTE: No written responses are required for *Solving Marriage Problems*, *Hope and Help*, and *On Marriage Counseling*. These texts may be referenced in class discussions, so be prepared to participate. See Project 5 (below).

Project One:

This project begins with week one and runs all semester. Each week, read the next succeeding chapter/s of *Thirty-Seven Strategies*. There are 37 chapters in the book, so you will need to read three chapters a week to complete the book and project.

Keep a journal entry of one short paragraph about how you implemented each chapter in a relationship in your life. If you are married, practice implementing these with your spouse; it will benefit your marriage.

Due: April 14, the final day of class. 25% of the grade value

Project Two:

Create a study guide for *When Sinners Say, I Do*. (At least *three* questions per chapter in **bold print** *with a 2- to 3-sentence preferred answer in italics.*)

Due: Feb. 17, the fourth week of class. Projects 2 and 3 are averaged to account for 25% of the grade value.

Project Three:

Create a study guide for *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage* by answering at least 3 of the “Questions for Reflection” at the end of each chapter. Use the same format as Project Two by typing the question in bold print and your 2- to 3-sentence preferred answer in italics.

Due: March 24, the eighth week of class

Project Four:

Submit a one-page review of *After an Affair* appropriate for the *Journal of Biblical Counseling*.

Due April 07, week twelve. Projects four and five are averaged for 25% of the grade value.

Project Five:

Project Five is ongoing throughout the semester. Read and come to class prepared to interact with each of these books as indicated on the class schedule: *Three to Go*, *Solving Marriage Problems*, *Hope and Help*, and *On Marriage Counseling*. You should be prepared to present 3-5 interesting points from each work and to provide a critique as interactive participation. Participation in these discussions is essential.

The final and class participation count for the last 25% of your grade. **Final is due April 18**

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Assignment (Refer to Page 3 for details)	Due Date
Project One	April 14
Project Two	February 17
Project Three	March 24
Project Four	April 07
Project Five	April 14/18

BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards, including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Course Schedule: (We have included prompts to keep you on track)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Three to Go Reference</u>
Jan 27	<p>The Contemporary Condition of M & F Introducing Syllabus <u>Assignments for Feb 03</u> Review the Syllabus for understanding Begin Project 1 with a journal entry for <i>37 Strategies</i> Due 4/14 Read and begin Project 2: Create a study guide for <i>When Sinners Say, "I Do"</i> Due 2/17</p>	PP-Presentation
Feb 03	<p>Theology of Marriage <u>Assignments for 2/4</u> Continue working on Projects 1 and 2 Read <i>Solving Marriage Problems</i> (Discussion 2/18)</p>	Lessons 1, 2, 7
Feb 10	<p>Expectations & Roles The Process of Change <u>Assignments due for 2/10</u> Continue working on Projects 1 and 2</p>	Lessons 5, 8 & PP
Feb 17	<p>A Biblical Methodology <u>Assignments due for 2/17</u> Project 2 Due: Study Guide for <i>When Sinners Say "I Do"</i> - Email to Dr. B. Continue working on Project 1</p>	Lesson 4
Feb 24	Spring Break	
March 03	<p>Needs Theory & Marriage Demands Discussion: <i>Solving Marriage Problems</i> <u>Assignments for 03</u> Continue working on Project 1 Begin Project 3: Create a study guide for <i>Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage</i> Due: 3/25 Read <i>Hope and Help</i> (Discussion 3/10)</p>	Lesson 6
March 10	<p>Marriage Counseling Begins at Home Communication: Personal Reality <u>Assignments for 3/10</u> Continue working on Projects 1 and 3</p>	<p>Lesson 3 Lesson 9</p>
March 17	<p>Four/Five Rules of Communication Discussion Case Application</p>	

	Discussion: <i>Hope and Help</i> <u>Assignments for 3/17</u> Continue working on Projects 1 and 3 Read <i>On Marriage Counseling</i>	
March 24	One Negative Rule of Discipline Family Dynamics and Child Rearing <u>Assignments for 3/31</u> Continue Working on Project 1 Project 3 due - Email to Dr. B.	Lesson 11, 12
March 31	Understanding Sex <u>Assignments for 4/1</u> Begin Project 4	Lessons 10, 13
April 07	Pornography Discussion Case Application <u>Assignments for 4/8</u> Continue Working on Project 1 Project 4 due - Email to Dr. B.	To Be Announced
April 14	Early Warning Signs of Marital Disillusionment Discussion: <i>On Marriage Counseling</i> <u>Assignments for 4/14</u> Project 1 Due - Email to Dr. B. Final Exam (Take Home: Due April 18) - Email to Dr. Eyrich	

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to be punctual and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

Class Policies and Procedures:

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note-taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3-point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

Video Conference Policies and Procedures:

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screens will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>

BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

1: this outcome is not covered in this class

2: this outcome is only touched on in this class

3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material

4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)

5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rationale (one sentence)
Scripture	5	Biblical counseling is Scripture based.
Reformed Theology	1	This is not a focus in this class.
Local Church	4	Students will be equipped to be engaged in church lay counseling ministry.
Wisdom	5	This is essential to Biblical Counseling.
Discipleship	5	This is essential to Biblical Counseling.
Communication	5	Participation in discussion is essential in this class.
Worldview	4	Worldview application is necessary in counseling.
Leadership	3	Students will learn how to affect counselees in this area.