**DRAFT v2**
**Subject to change. Full syllabus available in Canvas**
**January 13, 2027**

**Loyola Institute for Ministry**
**Loyola University New Orleans**

# Introduction to Pastoral Counseling
# LIM-G894-Y1G0E

## Spring 2027

**Important!** You will be notified by email when your course is available (normally the week before class begins). Please check your *Loyola Gmail* account for instructions. ***Please reply*** to the instructor's email when you receive it.

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to pastoral counseling as a ministry of care, emphasizing the integration of biblical and spiritual foundations with basic counseling theory and skills. Students will develop practical skills for listening, assessment, goal setting, crisis response, and short-term pastoral counseling. Through case studies and applied learning, students will explore how these skills can be used to respond appropriately and ethically to common concerns such as anxiety and depression, grief, anger, addictions, forgiveness and reconciliation, and relationship challenges. The course also considers the role, limitations, and ethical responsibilities of pastoral counselors within the broader context of Christian ministry.

## Key Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to::

- understand basic foundations and dimensions of pastoral counseling and counseling models.
- apply a spiritually-based knowledge of pastoral care and counseling to difficulties commonly faced by individuals seeking counsel from them.
- communicate effectively using basic counseling skills.
- evaluate personal limits in counseling and know how and when to make appropriate referrals and develop strategies for personal wellness and self-care.
- develop a local referral and consultation network.

## Required Readings

Benner, David G. *Strategic Pastoral Counseling: A Short-Term Structured Model*, 2nd edition. Baker Academic, 2003. ISBN: 978-0801026317 List Price: $23.00. Available as an ebook through Loyola's Monroe Library.

*The Catholic Study Bible*. 3rd edition, edited by Donald Senior and John J. Collins, Oxford UP, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0-19-02672-30 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-19-93627-76 (hardcover).

Additional readings and media as included in the Canvas course.

## Evaluation and Course Requirements

### Sequence of Topics/Calendar of Assignments

Weekly sessions in this course run from Tuesday–Monday. Please note that all assignments must be completed by Midnight on Monday, the last day of the weekly session, except for Week 1; you must complete your personal introduction by Sunday, 1/24 by 11:59 pm Central Time, or risk being administratively dropped from the course and your discussion questions by Monday, 1/25, by 11:59 pm Central Time.

| Week | Topic | Assignments |
|---|---|---|
| Week 1<br>1/18 – 1/25 | Introduction<br>(1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Holiday) | Introduce self, complete readings, media, discussion questions, availability survey |
| Week 2<br>1/26 – 2/1 | Counseling Issues | Complete readings, media, attend synchronous course meeting (optional) |
| Week 3<br>2/2 – 2/8 | Facilitating Spiritual Wholeness | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Referral and Resource Guide due 2/8 by 11:59 pm CT |
| Week 4<br>2/9 – 2/15 | Mardi Gras Holiday | |
| Week 5<br>2/16 – 2/22 | Uniqueness of Pastoral Counseling | Complete readings, media, discussion questions |
| Week 6<br>2/23 – 3/1 | Skill Development, Part I | Complete readings, media, discussion questions, Basic Skills Interview and Analysis due 3/1 by 11:59 pm CT |
| Week 7<br>3/2 – 3/8 | Skill Development, Part II | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend synchronous course meeting |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | (optional), Intermediate Skills Interview and Analysis due 3/1 by 11:59 pm CT |
| Week 8<br>3/9 – 3/15 | Cognitive Behavioral Therapy | Complete readings, media; attend small-group meeting (required) |
| Week 9<br>3/16 – 3/22 | Brief, Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling | Complete readings, media, discussion question |
| Week 10<br>3/23 – 3/29 | Holy Week and Easter Holiday (no class) | |
| Week 11<br>3/30 – 4/5 | Reconciliation-Focused Pastoral Counseling | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Research Paper Topic & Bibliography due 4/5 by 11:59 pm CT |
| Week 12<br>4/6 – 4/12 | Strategic Pastoral Counseling | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend small-group meeting (required); Spiritual Formation Essay due 4/12 by 11:59 pm CT |
| Week 13<br>4/13 – 4/19 | Managing Crises | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; attend synchronous course meeting (optional) |
| Week 14<br>4/20 – 4/26 | Wounded Healers | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Prayer Journal 2 due by 4/26 at 11:59pm CT |
| Week 15<br>4/27 – 5/3 | Lay Counseling— Equipping Parishioners to Support the Work | Complete readings, media, discussion questions; Integration paper due by 4/27 at 11:59 pm CT |
| Week 16<br>5/4 – 5/7 | Emotion Coaching | Complete readings, media, discussion question |
| 5/8 – 5/11 | Final Examination | Complete 2-hour Final Exam at a time of your choice between dates listed |

Tuesday, May 18, 11:59 pm CT: due date for posting final grades

**Week One Assignments**

1) View videos and read overviews in Canvas
2) Participate in Discussions on Canvas:
   - Introduce oneself and greet one's fellow students (Complete by 11:59 pm CT on 1/24 to avoid being administratively dropped from the course.)

- Respond to two Discussion Questions after reading and viewing videos

3) Read:
   - Ian F. Jones, *The Counsel of Heaven on Earth: Foundations for Biblical Christian Counseling*. B & H Publishing, 2006. chapter 3 (pp. 31-57). In Canvas; available to read at the Internet Archive after creating a free account.

*All other weekly assignments will be noted on Canvas.*

**Assessment**

Each student's final grade will include the following parts:

| | | Percentage of Grade | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Graduate | CEU |
| 1 | Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings | 35% | 95% |
| 2 | Referral and Resource Guide | 10% | – |
| 3 | Basic Skills Interview and Analysis | 10% | – |
| 4 | Intermediate Skills Interview and Analysis | 10% | – |
| 5 | Spiritual Formation: Wounded Healer Journal | 5% | 5% |
| 6 | Integration Paper | 15% | – |
| 7 | Final Exam | 15% | – |

**1) Substantive participation in weekly discussion via online postings (35% of graduate student evaluation; 95% of CEU evaluation)**

Each week of this course includes assignments for reading, audio segments (where applicable), videos, and discussion questions. These are provided in the weekly modules in Canvas. In addition to reading all the materials assigned and watching assigned videos, all students will also be expected to participate in the class discussions.

This course also offers a combination of the traditional asynchronous online course and synchronous webinars using Zoom. The majority of interaction will take place through threaded discussion, with a number of occasions for live webinars for all students over the course of the semester. Several times throughout the course, you will be invited to enter into a video class discussion in lieu of the written discussion board postings. Note: participation in the whole class video discussions are optional. You are also asked to participate in two required small group sessions, which is part of the participation grade.

**Directions for Weekly Posting in Discussions**

Please note: All times are Central Time.

For each Discussion assignment, students are required to make three (3) posts: a major post

of 200-400 words in which they respond to the question posted, and two (2) minor posts of no more than 150-200 words each in which they respond to two (2) of the major posts made by their fellow students. In weeks where there are two discussion board questions, students are required to make one major post and two minor posts for each question (totaling 2 major, 4 minor posts). Our weekly sessions will run from Tuesday to Monday.

***Beginning Each Tuesday***

- Read the overview for the week's work and begin individual work for the week. Questions that arise about the material may be addressed to the professor in the Question Board or via email.
- Contributions to Discussions should reflect critical engagement with both the required readings as well as any other assigned material and should demonstrate itself as such.

***By Thursday, 11:59pm CT.***

- When there is an assigned group leader, beginning several weeks into the semester, the first major post to the weekly discussion question is due by Thursday night for group leaders and by Saturday night for everyone else. Some weeks require students to answer more than one question as a major post.
- Groups will be created and assigned several weeks into the semester. When this occurs, the group discussion leader posts a response to the discussion question by Thursday night. This initial post by the group discussion leader should also raise a question for the group to consider and be between 200- 400 words (Major post).

***By Saturday, 11:59pm CT.***

- Other members of the group respond to the discussion question by the end of Saturday night with a major post between 200-400 words. Either this initial post or a subsequent minor post should also address the group leader's question.

***By Monday, 11:59pm CT.***

- All students respond to two other member's posts in 150-200 words by Monday night (Minor posts).
- All members should have a total of three discussion posts by Monday night (one Major, two Minor) for each discussion board question.

***Contents of Discussion Post***

To earn full credit, you should do the following things:

- post and respond by the deadline;

- adhere to word length requirements;
- refrain from inappropriate posts (words/tones that diminish the character and community of the course) Practice using "I-statements," avoid generalizations by qualifying your words;
- provide content of substance based on the course material—that is, not comments such as “I agree wholeheartedly,” but rather content that offers an original and informed contribution to the discussion, either as an opening or as a response, and reference course material;
- integrate (reference/cite) what you have read, how you understand the material, your experience, the remarks of your colleagues, and the course material;
- posting fully addresses the weekly questions and stimulates substantial follow-up postings;
- write in accessible prose—that is, not necessarily formal academic prose, but prose that is as clear and correct as you can make it, citing material not your own, and avoiding “text-speak” (using complete sentences rather than abbreviations and emoji to make your point, for example).

For a detailed explanation of the grading policy, please see the Rubric for Discussion Posts in Canvas on the course Home page under Groups & Discussions. I look forward to seeing your comments and insights in the discussions.

**Small Group Meetings (required):**

During our class you will be organized into smaller groups to host your own virtual learning sessions in weeks 8 and 12. This is a wonderful way to help build community and contextualize our discussions. You will meet within the same small group two different times during the semester. Small group assignments will be announced during Week 3 and also posted in Week 3 on the groups and discussions page.

You should plan to meet for at least one hour with other members of your group to discuss this week’s assigned material in light of the discussion questions on Canvas. Once you have met, you should complete the Small Virtual Group Assignment and submit it by Monday night of the weekly session.

**Synchronous Virtual Classes (optional):**

There will be **three** optional opportunities to meet synchronously as a whole class through Zoom, available through Canvas during the course of the semester. These will be scheduled in weeks 2, 7, and 13. Plan for each session to last 1 ½ hours. In a page in the week one module you are invited to fill out an availability survey so that we can find times that work for the majority of the class. After the surveys are complete I will send out an announcement to share the exact dates and times for these sessions.

If you attend the synchronous virtual class, you do not have to write your weekly major/minor posts on discussion board. Attendance and active participation in the virtual class will count for your weekly participation grade.

**2) Referral and Resource Guide (10% of graduate student evaluation)**

You will compile a referral guide that identifies, evaluates, and documents local counseling services, mental health professionals, and community resources relevant to individuals seeking pastoral care. Full details are found in Canvas.

**3) Basic Skills Interview, Analysis, and Reflection Paper (10% of graduate student evaluation)**

Conduct an interview to practice basic interviewing skills, seek feedback on your effectiveness as an interviewer, and evaluate your performance in a 5-10 page analysis and reflection. Full details are found in Canvas.

**4) Intermediate Skills Interview, Analysis, and Reflection Paper (10% of graduate student evaluation)**

Conduct an interview to practice intermediate interviewing skills, seek feedback on your effectiveness as an interviewer, and evaluate your performance in a 5-10 page analysis and reflection. Full details are found in Canvas.

**5) Spiritual Formation: Wounded Healer Journal (5% of graduate student evaluation; 5% of continuing education student evaluation)**

Respond to a prompt regarding personal woundedness and the pastoral ministry. Full details are found in Canvas.

**6) Integration Paper (15% of graduate student evaluation)**

Complete a paper that demonstrates your ability to apply faith-informed counseling approaches, evaluate relevant evidence, and articulate an integrated approach to soul care that recognizes the scope and limitations of pastoral counseling. Full details are found in Canvas.

**7) Final Exam (15% of graduate student evaluation)**

At a day and time of your choosing, complete a 2-hour final exam to demonstrate your knowledge of pastoral counseling principles, theological and ethical foundations, counseling models, and common counseling issues.

**Grading Scale**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A** | 93-100 | **B-** | 80-82.9 | **D+** | 67-69.9 |
| **A-** | 90-92.9 | **C+** | 77-79.9 | **D** | 60-66.9 |
| **B+** | 87-89.9 | **C** | 73-76.9 | **F** | 0-59.9 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **B** | 83-86.9 | **C-** | 70-72.9 |

### Overall Grading Scale

Please note that the LIM grading scale uses B as the standard for graduate-quality work. A and B+ indicate graduate work done with distinction, with B- and below signifying levels below graduate standards.

| Letter Grade | Quality Points | Characteristics of Student Work |
|---|---|---|
| **A** | **4.0** | Work done with distinction. An outstanding use of all four evaluation criteria as a catalyst for critical reflection. |
| **A-** | **3.7** | Work done with distinction, with a few minor corrections needed. |
| **B+** | **3.3** | Work of very good quality. The assignment is addressed in an exceptional manner with a good balance of personal insight and academic documentation. |
| **B** | **3.0** | The standard for the master's degree. The assignment is adequately addressed in a clear and concise manner with appropriate documentation. If subsequent work meets this standard of quality, the degree will be awarded. |
| **B-** | **2.7** | The work is slightly below the standard for master's level work. The assignment is addressed, but a number of corrections is needed to address the assignment in a clear and concise manner. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program. |
| **C+** | **2.3** | Substandard graduate work. Evaluation criteria are not adequately met in the assignment. Moderate improvement is needed. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program. |
| **C** | **2** | Less than graduate-level work. Evaluation criteria are not met. If subsequent work continues at this level, the student may not continue in the degree program. |
| **C-** | **1.7** | Below average, grade does not count towards graduation. |
| **D+** | **1.3** | Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation. |
| **D** | **1** | Minimally passing, grade does not count towards graduation. |
| **F** | **0** | Assignment not addressed at all, incomplete assignment, or not submitted on time. |

## Course Policies

### Incomplete Grade Policy

Students are subject to the university policy regarding incomplete grades with the following additions to university policy. Grades of Incomplete are given at the instructor's discretion. Students must complete LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources » Policies, Forms, & Services section of their Canvas course. Students should first inquire of their instructor whether or not they are eligible for an incomplete; this must occur with sufficient time to complete the process explained here. To be eligible, students may not have received an Incomplete in the previous semester, must have completed at least 75% of the course work to date, and must have at least a C or above in the course. After the instructor makes an initial assessment of eligibility, including checking with the LIM Office to ensure there was no Incomplete in the previous semester and finds the student eligible, by the due date of the course's final assignment, a student must complete and obtain all

signatures for LIM's Incomplete Grade Request Form found in the Resources section of their Canvas course and submit it to their instructor, who will forward a copy to the LIM Director. LIM graduate students may not receive Incompletes in LIM courses in consecutive semesters.

**Attendance & Participation**

Students are subject to the university policy regarding attendance found online in the Bulletin. Students in online courses communicate their presence by active participation in weekly discussions. Each course's instructor sets requirements for how many times students must post on the Discussion Board in Canvas. Failing to post during the first week of class may result in removal from the course. If you foresee that you will be unable to post in a given week, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Extensions for posting are given at the instructor's discretion and for a valid reason may be granted if arranged ahead of time. In extraordinary circumstances, students may arrange with their instructor to post up to two weeks after a deadline, though this may entail a grade reduction. Posts and other assignments submitted more than two weeks late may be subject to a grade of zero. If students do not post in a given week, they are considered absent. Absence for more than one week without contacting the instructor may result in removal from and failure of the course.

## University Policies

Please read Part 2 of the syllabus (located on LORA and in Canvas) for university policies on plagiarism, AI, accessible education, and more.