

**UNIT OUTLINE**

**Unit Code:** CO610

**Unit Title:** Towards a Christian Worldview for Counselling

**Semester:** 2

**Year:** 2020

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Unit code** | CO610 |
| **Unit name** | Towards a Christian Worldview for Counselling |
| **Associated higher education awards** | Master of Counselling |
| **Duration** | One semester |
| **Level** | Postgraduate |
| **Unit coordinator** | Neil Roberts |
| **Core/elective** | Core |
| **Weighting** | Unit credit points: 10  Course credit points: 160 |
| **Delivery mode** | Face-to-face on site  External |
| **Student workload** | *Face-to-face on site*  Contact hours 35 hours  Reading, study, and preparation 55 hours  Assignment preparation 60 hours  **TOTAL 150 hours**  *External*  Engagement with study materials 90 hours  Assignment preparation 60 hours  **TOTAL 150 hours** |
| Students requiring additional English language support are expected to undertake an additional one hour per week. |
| **Prerequisites/ co-requisites/ restrictions** | Nil |
| **Rationale** | Counsellors, whether working in a Christian or secular environment, are often faced with big questions such as, “If God is a loving God, why does he allow bad things to happen to innocent people?” and, “What is the purpose of my life?” Although these are fundamentally theological questions, counsellors need to be able to journey with their clients through these questions using their counselling knowledge and skills in the context of the therapeutic relationship. While clients come to counselling with these questions, counsellors are often working through these big questions themselves. In addition to the personal transformation process, counsellors need to grapple with the different worldview expressions that they may encounter and that underpin the various theoretical approaches they have encountered. In doing this, an informed integration of their worldview and counselling practice may be forged. |
|  | The previous units in this course have laid the foundations of theory and skills necessary for professional counselling. This unit critically examines this knowledge and understanding in the context of a transformative Christian worldview by inviting students to engage with the big questions that they will face as practitioners and through their clients. To make the learning authentic and relevant to the counselling practitioner, the topics of this unit have been expressed as the questions that clients, both Christian and non-Christian, may ask.  The unit will assist students to explore the big questions from the foundation of a Christian worldview. Through this process of personal investigation, using theological models, common assumptions, and comparisons of different worldviews, students will be able to give clients the permission to investigate the big questions and the tools to support them through their search. |
| **Prescribed text(s)** | Book of Readings (Available on Moodle™). |
| **Recommended readings** | **Books**  Anderson, R. (2003). *Spiritual caregiving as a secular sacrament: A practical theology for professional caregivers.* Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley.1  Davies, B. (2004). *An introduction to the philosophy of religion.* Oxford, UK: OUP.  Grenz, S. (2014). *Created for community: Connecting Christian belief with Christian living* (3rd ed*.*). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.  McGrath, A. (2012). *Theology: The basics.* West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.  Morgan, C., & Peterson, R. (2012). *The Kingdom of God: Theology in community*. Wheaton IL: Crossway.  Moreland, J, P., & Ciocchi, D. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Christian perspectives on being human: A multidisciplinary approach to integration.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.  O’Hara, D. (2013). *Hope in counselling and psychotherapy.* London, UK: Sage.  Sire, J, (2015). *Naming the elephant: Worldview as a concept* (2nd ed.)*.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP.  Swinton, J. (2000). *From bedlam to shalom: Towards a practical theology of human nature, interpersonal relationships, and mental health care.* New York, NY:Peter Lang.1  Weaver, N. K. (2013). *The theology of suffering and death: An introduction for caregivers.* New York, NY: Routledge.  Yong, A. (2012). *Spirit of love: A Trinitarian theology of grace.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.  **Journal Articles**  Spezio, M. (2013). Social neuroscience and theistic evolution: Intersubjectivity, love, and the social sphere. *Zygon,* 48(2), 428-438.  **Journals**  *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*  *Journal of Psychology and Theology*  In addition to the resources above, students should have access to a Bible, preferably a modern translation such as The Holy Bible: The New International Version 2011 (NIV 2011) or The Holy Bible: New King James Version (NKJV).  These and other translations may be accessed free on-line at http://www.biblegateway.com. The Bible app from LifeChurch.tv is also available free for smart phones and tablet devices. |
| **Specialist resource requirements** | Nil |
| **Content** | 1. What is theology and why does it matter? 2. What is the nature and character of God? 3. What does it mean to be made in the image of God? 4. What is the difference between a legalistic framework and grace, love and forgiveness? 5. Why is there sin and suffering in the world? 6. What does it mean to be reconciled and receive restoration? 7. How does counselling facilitate transformation? How is transformation ongoing? 8. Worldview divergence and its impact on Christianity 9. Contemporary worldviews and their influence on Christianity and counselling 10. Christian responses to an evolving pluralistic society |
| **Learning outcomes** | On completion of this unit, students will have demonstrated that they have:   1. identified and examined big questions that are often encountered in the practice of counselling through assumptions, theological models and a Christian worldview; 2. analysed essential elements of a Christian worldview and their relevance in a counselling context; 3. examined the concept of transformational change in the context of counselling; 4. critiqued basic tenets of various counselling theories from a Christian worldview perspective and integrated these aspects to inform practice in a counselling setting; 5. compared and contrasted the responses of a Christian worldview with those of other worldviews to the big questions that are often encountered counselling; 6. analysed and reflected upon the student’s own worldview and transformational experiences as these influence their counselling practice; 7. communicated at an appropriate tertiary standard with special attention to correct grammars, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, usage, sentence structure, logical relations, style, referencing, and presentation. |
| **Assessment tasks** | **Task 1: Forum discussions**  You are to respond to four (4) Moodle™ discussions. These posts will reflect on personal transformational experiences, and significant learnings you have gained from the lecture topics and relevant readings. They will also reflect on the implications of these experiences and learnings for your counselling practice.  Word Length/Duration: 1,000 words (4 x 250 words)  Weighting: 20%  Learning Outcomes: 1-7  Assessed: Weeks 4, 6, 8, 10    **Task 2: Essay**  Examine one topic from Content items 2-6 as a component of the Christian worldview, analysing major theological perspectives that inform this. Consider the personal relevance of these perspectives to your developing counselling practice and Christian worlview.  Word Length/Duration: 2,500 words  Weighting: 40%  Learning Outcomes: 1,2,7  Assessed: Week 9 |
|  | **Task 3: Case Study**  You will be provided with a case study. Compare how the issues within the case study would be perceived and understood within a Christian Worldview, and an alternate worldview or philosophy of your choice. Explain how the difference in perspective might impact the counselling relationship, process and/or outcome.  Word Length/Duration: 2,500 words  Weighting: 40%  Learning Outcomes: 1-4, 6,7  Assessed: Week 15 |
| **Unit summary** | This unit provides students with an opportunity for an in-depth exploration of the big questions faced in counselling practice in light of key Christian and non-Christian worldview concepts in order to help them work with their clients as they process these big questions. |