

EDUC 5553 COIN4: Topics in Counselling - Spirituality and Learning

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Syllabus for Topics in Counselling - Spirituality and Learning

We are grateful to call Mi'kma'ki the home of our program and where we engage in this inspiring work. This land is covered by the *Treaties of Peace and Friendship*, which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) People first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources but recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. We also recognize the 400+ year history of communities of African descent and the 50 African Nova Scotian communities throughout the region today.

School of Education faculty aim to model inclusive practices that welcome and anticipate diversity. We encourage students to engage faculty in conversation about their learning to establish strong and effective pedagogical relationships. Formal procedures exist on campus to support students with documented exceptionalities to obtain accommodations. If students wish to access support and services, please contact accessible learning staff members by email at disability.access@acadiau.ca or visit their office in Rhodes Hall. Further information can be found on the accessible learning website. If students have documented accommodation, please ensure instructors receive the applicable paperwork before the beginning of the course.

Course Overview

A Short Reflection

Somewhere in the din, God is trying to reach us. We have a place in the cosmos, but we won't find it through fighting. Fighting is perhaps the most distraction from our proper duties as human beings. It cuts us off and prevents us from listening to the whispers of the spirit, as well as listening to our neighbours. We hear the distorted voice, the one that told Gaddafi he was the saviour of Africa, the one that sends us out to battle so often for nothing. But the real voice, that of the spirit is saying to us:

Be quiet, listen, feel.

Be kind.

Accept differences, even those of Divine belief, for there is no "truth" in these things, only lessons.

Learn from differences.

Feed your neighbour.

Take your anger out on untilled field.

Liberally apply compassion, especially to yourself, for if we're not compassionate about our own foibles and screwups, then we can't be authentically be compassionate towards others.

We're all in the same foundering boat. It's our scars that unite us.

Spirituality is believed to be an important attribute of human experience. In counselling, it may serve as a tool to enhance resilience in the face of adversity and a compass pointing the way to a fulfilled life. *If you are not in the counselling program, this course may help you help others by understanding how spirituality may impact your own life and that of another.*

Erich Fromm wrote that we do not have to give up our concern for the soul if we do not accept the tenets of religion. The Greek term ψυχή (psyche) means spirit, soul, mind, and self. The separation that has existed between the mental health professions and religion for most of the 20th century is being examined. It is now common for people to present concerns to therapists, which they have categorized as spiritual. Counsellors-in-training are looking for ways to explore and integrate spiritual values in counselling by examining topics and questions around meaning, purpose, connectedness, mystery, divinity, and life direction.

Studies have shown spirituality in people's lives may:

- *Promote positive health-related behaviours, such as meditation, physical activity, and altruism.*
- *Reduce illness-related behaviours, such as smoking and drinking alcohol.*
- *Enhance a person's [sense of self](#) and personal growth.*
- *Instill appreciation and awareness of one's interaction with one's environment and others.*
- *Provide access to a social support network to sustain emotional and psychological well-being.*

<https://www.sharp.com/health-news/how-spirituality-can-benefit-your-mental-health>

In this course, learners will reflect on their spirituality within counselling and develop competencies to help clients feel safe when examining issues of belief and unbelief and the effects such issues have on their lives. Students are invited to learn more about beliefs and belief systems other than their own as they reflect on the culture and content of various religions/faith orientations/spirituality.

Students are encouraged to access and use additional resource or substitute given resources with permission from the instructor from their spiritual traditions in responding to the assignments throughout this course.

Learning Outcomes --> Students will:

Culture and Worldview Competencies

1. Describe the similarities and differences between spirituality, religion, and faith traditions including the basic beliefs of various spiritual systems, major world religions, agnosticism, and atheism.
2. Recognize the client's spiritual or religious belief or absence of them is central to their worldview and can influence psychosocial functioning.

Counselor Self-Awareness

3. Actively explore one's own attitudes, beliefs, and values about spirituality and/or religion.
4. Continuously evaluate the influence of their own spiritual and/or religious beliefs and values on the client and the counseling process.
5. Comprehend the limits of their knowledge of a client's spiritual and/or religious perspective.
6. Acquaint themselves with religious and spiritual resources, including printed and digital literature, and spiritual people who can be avenues for consultation and to whom the counselor can refer.

Human and Spiritual Development

7. Compare various models of spiritual and/or religious development and their relationship to human development.

Communication

8. Respond to client communications about spirituality and/or religion with acceptance and sensitivity.
9. Integrate spiritual and/or religious concepts which are consistent and acceptable to the client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives.

*These outcomes are adapted from **The Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling** - The American Counseling Association © 2009.*



Instructor - Clarence DeSchiffart

Clarence DeSchiffart has extensive work and life experience in the career development and counselling field. He worked for over 30 combined years as the **Coordinator of Career Development and Essential Skills Services** for the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia Department of Education. He currently is semi-retired, seeking purpose and enjoyment through teaching, training, consulting, and facilitating various groups.

Clarence received the highest national recognition for his work through the **Canadian National Stu Conger Award for Leadership in Career Development and Counselling (2017)** from the *Canadian Career Development Foundation*. In the same year he also was the recipient of the **Life Time Achievement Award (2017)** from the *Nova Scotia Career Development Association*

Clarence has been teaching graduate courses in *Career Development Process and Practice*, *Theories of Career Development* and *Group Counselling* at Acadia since 1996. Conducting professional training sessions in career development and career counselling for professionals throughout Nova Scotia has been a favorite aspect of his work.

Clarence has been presenting and training in the career development field at local, provincial and national conferences. He has been part of a number of national and provincial career development initiatives including:

- The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs
- The Blueprint Leadership Sessions
- The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners, Steering Committee
- The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners Revision Committee 2010 - 12
- NATCON steering committee
- Canada Career Information Partnership (CCIP)
- Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA)

He attended Acadia University and obtained a **Bachelor of Science in Recreation (Outdoor Recreation)** and a **Masters of Education (Counselling)**. A **Bachelor of Education (Outdoor and Experiential Education)** was received from Queen's University.

Previous to his last full time employment, Clarence worked as a teacher, outdoor instructor with young offenders, outdoor education director, outdoor specialist, and outdoor and leadership counsellor with various organizations in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

Clarence grew up in Dutch family who immigrated in 1948. He has in 6 siblings, all born and raised in Eastern Ontario. He was raised in a faith based family. Since coming to Nova Scotia (2x), he has gone through significant experiences which transformed his spirituality and faith development. Clarence stepped outside his own faith tradition in his late twenties to enter a local small faith based community. This experience led him to do several silent retreats which were 7 days long. One of his deepest experiences was a 32 day silent directed retreat outside Denver, Colorado.

Clarence continues to yearn to grow spiritually and continues to strive to deepen his spiritual life amid all of his current life and world circumstances.



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Course Materials

Required Textbook & Readings

[Craig S. Cashwell \(Editor\), J. Scott Young \(Editor\); Integrating Spirituality and Religion Into Counseling: A Guide to Competent Practice](#), 3rd Edition. American Counseling Association. 2020. ISBN: 9781119684619, 1119684617

Ernest Kurtz & Katherine Ketcham; [The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning](#). Bantam, 1993. ISBN: 978055337132

You will find information on accessing Library resources from off-campus here - <https://library.acadiau.ca/distance-education/access.html>.

ADDITIONAL READINGS & RESOURCES

Many resources listed on Moodle and throughout this course are meant to expand students' knowledge and facilitate ongoing reflection. There is a requirement to read these articles which are linked to websites and/or found on Moodle.

If students have books or resources on spirituality *which align more closely* with their own spiritual orientation, **please use them** but check with the instructor first. Students will have the opportunity to list these resources on Moodle for other students to access.

LEARNING TASKS

Learning Tasks <i>(detailed descriptions are found on Moodle under the next section)</i>	Learning Outcome Number(s)	Percentage Value
LT1 Personal Spiritual History & Current Views	1, 2, 3, 4, 7	25%
LT2 Conversation with a Spiritually Minded Practitioner	5, 6	10%
LT3 Implement a Spiritual Practice	5, 6, 9	15%
LT4 Process and Reflection Journal (Readings)	2, 4, 5, 7, 8	25%
LT5 Summative Presentation: An Integrative Narrative	2, 3, 7, 8, 9	25%

The assignments are delivered to the instructor via assignment drop-boxes. Please remember to put your name, student number, course number, and assignment number on the assignment and keep a copy in the event the original is lost.

The last two assignments should be received at least 2 weeks prior to the 6 month-deadline. This will allow adequate processing time to evaluate the final assignment and submit a final grade.

** Note: all files must be readable by a reasonably current version of MS Office.

Student Handbook

You are responsible for becoming familiar with the contents of the Student Handbook. It contains important information about scheduling examinations (if applicable), applying for extensions, withdrawing from your course, ordering books, and computer and library services available to you. If you have questions about the policies outlined in the handbook (<https://courseware.acadiau.ca/openacadia/studenthandbook.html>), contact:

Open Acadia
21 University Avenue (Rhodes Hall)
Wolfville, NS B4P 2R6
Phone: 1-800-565-6568
Fax: 1-902-585-1068
Email: openacadia@acadiau.ca

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity demands responsible use of the work of other scholars. It is compromised by academic dishonesty such as cheating and plagiarism. A student who is uncertain whether or not a course of action might constitute cheating or plagiarism should seek in advance the advice of the instructor involved.

- Cheating is copying or the use of unauthorized aids or the intentional falsification or invention of information in any academic exercise
- Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or words of another as one's own. Students are required to acknowledge and document the sources of ideas that they use in their written work.
- Self-plagiarism is also a form of plagiarism. It is the presentation of the same work in more than one course without the permission of the instructors involved.
- A student who knowingly helps another to commit an act of academic dishonesty is equally guilty.
- Penalties are levied in relation to the degree of the relevant infraction. They range from requiring the student to re-do the piece of work, through failure on that piece of work, to failure in the course, and to dismissal from the university.

Course Schedule

This course is an open-entry course delivered online through Open Acadia. Students have 6 months to complete this course. Students can set their schedule, but the instructor must be notified if they intend to complete the course in less than 3 months. Extensions requested due to extenuating circumstances are relatively rare and subject to the usual policies of **Open Acadia** and the **School of Education**.

*** Please note: Topics in Counselling – Spirituality and Learning is a continuous intake, online course that runs throughout the year. Students should be aware that the instructor may take necessary breaks in the summer and December holiday periods. Students will be made aware of these breaks in advance. In these times, the instructor will not be returning email or providing course feedback. If you find these breaks impact your ability to complete the course within the required 6 months, please contact your course instructor or jessica.saunders@acadiu.ca to request an extension.*

Students should familiarize themselves with all requirements of this course and pace their coursework, ensuring things are not left until a few weeks before your completion date. Within reason, the instructor will try to accommodate a student's schedule while allowing enough time to grade final learning tasks.

Recommended Schedule

Students may work at their own pace but are encouraged to complete a module every two to three weeks.

There are **10 Modules** in this course. It is essential students manage tighter deadlines if their time to meet deadlines is shortened and modules are still left to complete.

Recommended Schedule

Module	Description of Module	Learning Tasks due
1	Awareness & Spiritual Development in Counselling	LT1 Due – Personal Spiritual History & Current Views
2	Understanding Faith Development	
3	Spirituality & the Therapeutic Alliance	LT2 Due - Conversation with a Spiritually Minded Practitioner
4	Prayer	
5	Mindfulness	
6	Depression & Dark Night of the Soul	
7	Suffering	LT3 Due - Implement a Spiritual Practice
8	Forgiveness	
9	Dying & Death	
10	Enlightenment	LT4 Due - Process & Reflection Journal LT5 Due - Summative Presentation: An Integrative Narrative

The content of this course (including syllabus, handouts, PowerPoints, lectures, presentations, assignment feedback, etc.) is considered intellectual property. It may only be copied for personal use by students registered in the course. This includes original material posted on Moodle. It is a violation of copyright to share or upload this material where it can be accessed by people not registered in the course. It is considered a violation of trust and professional ethics for students to make audio, video, or photographic recordings without obtaining consent. Violations of trust will be taken seriously. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the *Student Code of Conduct* outlined below. For students with disabilities, the instructor's consent will not be unreasonably withheld. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodation should contact Accessible Learning. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that information regarding accommodations is presented to the instructor no later than the first day of class.

Lecture Recording Policy: Recording of Course-Related Classes, Meetings, and Other Activities:
<https://hr.acadiau.ca/files/sites/hr/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Lecture%20Recording%20Policy.pdf>

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR CANADIAN COUNSELLOR

The Council for the Accreditation of Counsellor Education Programs (CACEP) accredits the Counselling Program at Acadia University. All courses offered in the Program meet the core competency requirements of CACEP. For a complete description of CACEP program standards and competencies, visit <http://www.ccacc.ca/en/accreditation/standards/>.

Competency	Type	Learning Task (LT)
· the role and identity of professional counsellors and their relationships with other related professionals	CORE 1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Preface, Ch. 1, 3, & 5 • LT1 & LT5
· opportunity to apply ethical decision-making processes to case material	CORE 2d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module activities & readings • Read: Ch 2 • LT1
· counselling theories that provide the student with a consistent framework to conceptualize client issues and identify and select appropriate counselling strategies and interventions	CORE 3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module activities & readings • Read: Ch 6 - 9 • LT4
· understand and apply effective counselling approaches and techniques to facilitate client exploration of issues, examination of alternate perspectives, and development of appropriate actions with respect to the issues presented	CORE 3b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module activities & readings • Read: Ch 10-15 • LT2, LT3, LT4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · a systems perspective that recognizes that all clients are part of larger societal, colleague, friendship, and family systems. Curricular experiences are provided regarding systems theories (including family theories) and related approaches and strategies 	<p>CORE 3c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module activities & readings • Assignments 1 & 5 • Read: Ch 6 • LT4, LT5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · an understanding of the application of theories of human development in understanding and working with individuals, families and groups experiencing developmental transitions across the lifespan 	<p>CORE 5a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module activities & readings • Read: Ch 6 • LT4, LT5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · understanding and respecting human diversity within the Canadian multi-cultural society 	<p>CORE 6a, b, c, d.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module activities & readings • Read: Ch 6, 15, & 16

OTHER ACADIA UNIVERSITY COMPONENTS

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: Moodle

Moodle is the online learning environment at Acadia University School of Education. This system will host the online learning materials and activities for this course. All content, including lecture PowerPoints, additional readings, resources, and handouts, will be posted to Moodle.

Getting help with Moodle account:

To learn more about Moodle's features and functions, visit <https://ltid.acadiu.ca/home.html>. If you need technical support, contact oasupport@acadiu.ca.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The faculty of the M.Ed. Counselling Program are committed to creating an enriching and collaborative environment that is equitable, brave, inclusive, and respectful, such that all members of the professional learning community can work together with a shared commitment to the growth of pre-service counselling practitioners. This includes pre-service counsellors, counsellor supervisors, counsellor educators, and community members. This behavioural expectation applies to all students when interacting with any member of the M.Ed. Counselling Program, including community partners and clients, and extends to conduct within classroom and practicum activities. The School of Education's faculty and staff and the greater Acadia University community take a firm stance in eliminating harassment, bullying, and discrimination by any member of the Counselling Program. Violations of this Code of Conduct or the Acadia Non-Judicial Student Code of Conduct, or the Professional Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice presented by the Canadian Counselling & Psychotherapy Association may result in individuals being asked to leave a class, a practicum placement, or the Program. When student violations are deemed serious, the student's actions will be recommended for review by the School of Education's Professional Concerns Committee. Students should understand that serious violations may result in removal from the program.

ACADIA UNIVERSITY GRADING

Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in the School of Education Graduate Programs.

Raw Score	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Grade Description
90 - 100	A+	4.33	Outstanding performance, demonstrating a complete and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, concepts, skills, and application.
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance, indicating a superior grasp of subject matter and concepts; development of relevant skills and application to a high level.
80-84	A-	3.67	
77-79	B+	3.33	Good performance, indicating a thorough understanding of subject matter and concepts; development of relevant skills and application to a fairly high level.
73-76	B	3.00	
70-72	B-	2.67	Minimum adequate performance in a graduate course

Academic options for students receiving less than a B- grade in a graduate course are outlined in the Acadia University Calendar (page 40)

See:

https://registrar.acadiau.ca/files/sites/registrar/pdfs/Academic_Calendars/calendar_final_2022-2023.pdf

WHAT OTHER POLICIES SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT

There are a number of other policies, procedures, as well as student support information that you should be aware of relating to requesting extensions, review of results, course completion and program continuation, attendance, children in class, cancelling class, concerns and complaints, as well as academic integrity. These are found at: <https://med.acadiau.ca/programs/counselling/current-students/program-planning.html>

For online courses through Open Acadia, see: <https://courseware.acadiau.ca/openacadia/studenthandbook.html>

STUDENT SUPPORTS

There are a number of supports for students at Acadia, including, but not limited to, accessible learning services, the writing centre, the indigenous gathering space and resource centre, the women's centre, the equity office, the black student employment and cultural navigator, spiritual wellness, services regarding LGBTQI, and mental health support services.

The most up-to-date list is found on our website at the following link. Students are encouraged to visit the site to see what is available.

<https://education.acadiau.ca/our-programs/bachelor-of-education/current-students/b-ed-student-supports.html>

[Click here to return to the Module](#)