

Houston Graduate School of Theology

COU 765 Family Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Spring 2018, Thursdays, 1:00-3:30 P.M.

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Houston Graduate School of Theology equips women and men to be ministers and messengers of God's mission of reconciliation through academic excellence, personal transformation, and leadership development

I. Course Description

A study of mediation within the context of families as a means of resolving conflicts without resort to adversarial means such as litigation; attention is given to family dynamics, child development, the Texas Family Code, family violence, and facilitating of communication and dispute resolution.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Describe the theories, processes, principles, techniques, and skills of mediation through the readings, discussions, and simulation exercises found in case scenarios and applications from *The Mediator's Handbook*. MAC-2, -3, -4, -5
- B. Embrace peacemaking skills through reading and critical review of the textbook *Peace Skills: A Manual for Community Mediators*. MAC-2, -3, -4, -5
- C. Describe, examine, and interpret fair negotiations in couples experiencing or planning a divorce, reconciliation, and conflict resolution through a critical review of *A Guide to Divorce Mediation*. MAC-3, -5
- D. Learn techniques for communicating with tact and professionalism as evidence in the critical book review of *Difficult Conversations*. MAC-1, -2, -3, -4, -5
- E. Select a mediation topic and discuss how it will be utilized in counseling practice as evidenced in a final research and reflection paper. MAC-2, -3, -4

III. Texts and Course Schedule

Required Textbooks:

Beer, J., Packard, C. (2012). *The Mediator's Handbook*, 4th ed. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers (Friends). ISBN 978-0-86571-722-0

Freidman, G. J. (1993). *A Guide to Divorce Mediation*. New York: Workman Publishing Co., Inc. ISBN 1- 56305-245-8

Kraybill, R. S. (2001). *Peace Skills: Manual for Community Mediators*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. ISBN 0-7879-4799-7

Stone, D., Patton, B., and Heen, S. (2000). *Difficult Conversations*, 2nd ed. 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: Penguin Books. ISBN 978-0-14-311844-2

Class and Reading Schedule

January 18

Reading: *The Mediator's Handbook pp 1 - 26*

- Introduction to the course, to include expectations for written assignments
- Student and professor introductions
- **Lecture, Group discussions, Role play, Case Scenarios will be a part of the semester classes.**

January 25

The Mediator's Handbook pp 117 - 189

February 01

The Mediators Handbook pp 79 - 111

Due: 4-page Critical Book Review: *The Mediator's Handbook*

February 08

The Mediators Handbook pp 79 - 111

February 15

The Mediators Handbook pp 141 - 191

February 22

Kraybill: *Difficult Conversations pp 1 – 42*

Freidman: *A Guide to Divorce Mediation pp 147 – 171*

Due: 4-Page Critical Book Review: *A Guide to Divorce Mediation*

March 01

Kraybill: *pp 43 – 74*

Freidman: *pp 173 - 197*

March 08

Kraybill: *pp 75 - 104*

Freidman: *pp 221 - 242*

March 15 Spring Break

March 22

Kraybill: *pp 105 – 131*

Freidman: *pp 279 – 293*

Intro to Difficult Conversations

March 29

Difficult Conversations pp 1 – 57

Due: 4-Page Critical Book Review: *Peace Skills: Manual for Community Mediators*

April 05

Difficult Conversations pp 58 – 108

April 12

Difficult Conversations pp 11 – 162

April 19

Difficult Conversations pp 163 – 234

April 26

Difficult Conversations pp 235 - 271

Due 4-Page Critical Book Review *Difficult Conversations*

May 03

Due: Mediation Essay- 10 pages: Each student will write a 10-page academic essay, with a descriptive introduction, at least three parts, and a substantive conclusion dealing with the chosen mediation topic and how it will be utilized in their counseling/ministry/chaplaincy work and calling.

The professor reserves the right to adjust classroom topics as the course develops.

IV. Course Requirements

- A. Final Essay/ Presentation 30%
(Hardcopy required)
Posted on Turnitin
- B. 4 Critical Book Reviews @10% each 40%
(Hardcopy required)
Posted on Turnitin
- C. Group Presentations 20%
- D. Participation/Attendance 10%
- E. Turnitin

Class: COU 765

Password: Terrill765 (Enrollment Key)

ID: 16856322

Student Workload Expectations:

Class Time – 45 hours

Textbooks - (1000 pages @ 20 pp/hr) = 50 hours

Four critical book reviews (4 pp/1.5/hr.) = 24 hours

Essay/Presentation (10 pp/1.5 hr) = 15 hour

Total Hours: 134

- E. Course Grading Scale** - Grading criteria include, following the assignment (30%), compiling a paper or project with graduate-level content (50%), using proper grammar and writing techniques and adhering to correct formatting (20%). An “A” represents excellent work in all categories; “B” is good; “C” is fair; and “D” is poor. Pluses and minuses will be assigned as appropriate.

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|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|
| A | 100-95 | B | 89-87 | C | 79-75 |
| A- | 94-93 | B- | 86-84 | C- | 74-72 |
| B+ | 92-90 | C+ | 83-80 | D | 71-70 |

VI. Classroom-related Academic Policies

- A.** Regular attendance and regular submission of assignments on due dates in the syllabus is expected. The following guidelines have been approved for inclusion in all HGST syllabi and reflect standards for all courses:

Fall/Spring semester 15-session course – 3-absence maximum

Summer term 8-session course – 1-absence maximum (equals 4 hours).

6-session hybrid – 1-absence maximum

4-session hybrid – 0-absence maximum

If a student reaches the designated number of absences, the student will no longer be allowed to stay in the class. The student does have the opportunity to appeal to the Academic Dean and should assume responsibility for scheduling that meeting as soon as possible.

Regular attendance and regular submission of assignments on due dates in the syllabus is expected. Each student must talk to the instructor about circumstances affecting his or her ability to attend class and complete assignments. A “T” will be noted in the attendance roster for students who develop a pattern (3 times) of missing up to half of a class session by either tardiness or early departure. Three “tardies,” as described above, will equal one absence. More than three absences (excused or unexcused) will result in a letter-grade reduction of the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

- B.** Work is expected on the due date. Late papers will receive no less than a one-letter grade reduction.
- C.** Turnitin.com
- All written assignments are subject to required submission to www.turnitin.com to check for originality and style. The assignments that are required for submission will be described in the syllabus.
 - Students will create an account at www.turnitin.com. After doing so, the student will join the course page with the code and password supplied by the instructor. A list of assignments and due dates will be available on the course page.
 - Students will submit assignments by the due date and time and will be required to submit the assignments in a hard copy format as well.
 - Work Not posted on Turnitin will have a one letter FINAL grade reduction.
- D.** Electronic Equipment Usage in Classrooms
- It is expected that students will use technology (cell phones, laptop computers, iPads, etc.) during classes only for the purposes of class work. Therefore, students should turn off cell phones and refrain from texting and using laptop computers during classes except for the purposes of taking notes or doing research specifically

- authorized by the course instructor. Students who have emergency needs not covered by this policy must ask for an exception from the course instructor.
- E. *Please review the Academic Catalog for requirements regarding Incompletes and Plagiarism issues. For more information on Library Services, please download the Library Handbook from the HGST website.*

VII. Notes for Writing Assignments

For MAC students: APA formatting is accepted as prescribed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition*.

All students shall utilize 12-point Times New Roman font throughout. The instructor prefers that the student **not** use presentation or report binders or folders. She prefers submission of papers with staples or binder clips.

Critical, or formal, writing differs from colloquial writing or spoken English at several points. The student should note the following guidelines for critical writing. The instructor expects students to follow these guidelines strictly for academic-style assignments. Failure to do so will be penalized.

- Avoid first- or second-person references, both singular and plural (“I,” “we,” or “you”). Keep the written projects objective and professional. The student must remember that imperative forms are second person.
- Never use contractions.
- Avoid passive voice construction (i.e., The student should write “God chose Joshua” rather than “Joshua was chosen by God.”). Some exceptions are necessary, but limiting the use of passive voice is a good policy.
- Be sure that number and tense always agree (i.e., Do not write in one place that “Brueggemann argues . . .” and at another place “Brueggemann argued . . .”). Subject-verb agreement is imperative.
- Spellcheck! Spellcheck! Spellcheck!
- Grammar check works as well!
- All pronouns should have clear antecedents. Avoiding “it is” and “there is” in the paper removes much of the ambiguity of pronoun usage.
- Sentence fragments are unacceptable. Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate.