

Course Syllabus
**KNP3506 – Wrestling with Addiction: Assessment, Treatment
and Spirituality**
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Term 2026

Instructor Information

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Course Identification

Course Number: KNP3506
Course Format: *In-person*
Course Name: Wrestling with Addiction: Assessment, Treatment and Spirituality
Course Location: Room TBA, Knox College
Class Times: Thursdays, May 7- June 25, 6:00pm – 9:30 pm (+ 4 hrs videos on MI)
Prerequisites: Students will have completed one or more courses in spiritual/pastoral care, human growth and development, or psychotherapy, prior to taking this course.

Course Description

This course examines the social determinants of addiction and considers the past and current influences on addiction counselling and approaches to treatment. In doing so, it expands the biopsychosocial perspective of the field of psychology and addiction to include spirituality and cultural sensitivity as important determinants in assessment and treatment choices. The course will introduce students to specific assessment, interviewing, and treatment modalities used in addiction counselling. Students will gain an understanding of the experience of addiction and the importance of the motivation to change. Students will gain an overview of relapse prevention as well as crisis intervention and the contexts of therapy for addiction treatment. Students will practice motivational interviewing and gain a basic understanding of how Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) is used in treatment programs in the greater Toronto area. Students will also wrestle with spiritual and theological understandings of addiction. This course has been designed for training professionals who will practice in institutional contexts (including addiction treatment centres, hospitals, hospices, schools, and prisons) and in congregational or social ministry contexts. The curriculum is aligned with CRPO entry-to-practice and CASC competencies.

This course engages with the theme of Spiritual Care and Social Services in the Knox MPS.

A note about “trigger” warnings: You are preparing for vocations (congregational ministry, spiritual care, psychotherapy, teaching, research, etc.) that by their nature present you with stimulating situations, including domestic violence, child sexual abuse, effects of addiction, and other very traumatic events. Your vocational preparation anticipates that you will meet such situations in the real world, that you will not be warned about the nature of the stimulus, and that you have to protect a person from your own reaction to situations that may “trigger” a response in you. Your faculty advisor, the registrar’s staff, and the Ecumenical Chaplains can direct you to resources for you to engage in care for your own self. In your studies, you will likely not be warned about the kind of “triggering” event that you may encounter.

In this course, if you begin to lose control of your emotions, you may leave with one colleague from the class until you can collect yourself, or you may engage in other practices (journaling, meditation) that allow you to regain control. If you or your colleague are concerned that you cannot regain control or are unduly distressed, you and your colleague should seek assistance from the Knox Registrar’s office. Staff have access to immediate assistance. In the end, your emotional safety is your own responsibility.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

- Miller, Geri (2020). *Learning the Language of Addiction Counseling*, 5th edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- May, Gerald (2007). *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions*.
- Grisel, Judith (2020). *Never Enough: The neuroscience and experience of addiction*. Anchor Publishing.
- American Psychiatric Association. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*. Arlington, VA: Author. (**E-book available through U of T libraries**).

Please note: all course texts should be available at Caversham Booksellers, located at Harbord west of Spadina.

Video through Uof T libraries (free)

- Motivational interviewing - <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/watch/motivational-interviewing/details?context=channel:brief-therapy-for-addictions>
- Motivational Interviewing - <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/watch/the-essentials-of-motivational-interviewing>

Course Website

Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you’ll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students on using Quercus can be found at:

<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students experiencing difficulties accessing Quercus should contact the registrar’s office of their college.

- Centre for Addiction and Mental Health: <https://CAMH.ca>
- College of Registered Psychotherapists: <https://crpo.ca>
- Canadian Association of Spiritual Care: <https://spiritualcare.ca>

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Topic	Topic Breakdown	Reading
<u>Week 1</u> May 7	Introduction Models of Addiction	-Past/Current influences on Addiction Counselling - Moral, Personality Trait and Biopsychosocial plus models of addiction -spiritual/theological model	Miller Chapter 1
<u>Week 2</u> May 14	Psychotherapeutic Theories Applied to Addiction	- Psychoanalytic/Adlerian - Choice Theory/Reality Therapy - Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy	Miller Chapter 2
<u>Week 3</u> May 21	Assessment of Addiction	- Interviews - Behavioural Observations - Physiological Instruments - Psychometric Instruments - Co-occurring disorders and behavioral addictions	Miller Chapter 3 and 4
<u>Week 4</u> May 28	Core Treatment Process	- Crisis Intervention - Individual Therapy - Group Therapy - Family Therapy -Self-Help Groups	Miller Chapter 5 and Chapter 8
<u>Week 5</u> June 4	Treatment-Related Issues	Guest speaker: Harm reduction in addiction care - Chronic Pain - HIV/AIDS - Intimate Partner Violence - Homelessness - Cultural sensitivity	Miller Chapter 6, 10 and 11

<p><u>Week 6</u> June 11</p>	<p>Relapse Prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relapse Prevention Models and Techniques - Case Studies of Special Populations 	<p>Miller Chapter 7</p>
<p><u>Week 7</u> June 18</p>	<p>Elaboration of Specific Therapies and Techniques</p>	<p>Guest clinician: Outpatient assessment and treatment of addiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive Psychology - Client Resilience - Stages of Change Model - Motivational Interviewing - Brief Therapy 	<p>Miller Chapter 9</p>
<p><u>Week 8</u> June 25</p>	<p>Incorporating Spirituality into Addiction Counselling</p>	<p>Guest speaker: Residential treatment (Teen Challenge)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - History of Spirituality in Addictions Counselling - Barriers and Bridges - Spiritual Identity - Counselling Resources and Techniques 	<p>Miller Chapter 12</p>

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas:

Basic Degree Students:

(1) Participation (10%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to demonstrate that they have read and internalized readings and engage actively in experiential learning opportunities including, role playing and case study discussions.

(2) Course Assignments (50%)

Article Summary and Video Presentation (10%): Students will choose one article from the assigned readings and note their choices on a sign-up sheet provided before the first class. The students will prepare a five-minute video presentation for the class, describing a) the thesis and b) the main points of the supporting argument in the article. Students will then submit, on Quercus, a brief (about 1/2 page, single-spaced) précis of the thesis and argument of each chosen article along with their slides. These will be graded based on students' ability to be clear and concise. Due between May 14 and June 11, 2026.

*Book Review (25%): Students will choose either Gerald May's (2007) *Addiction and Grace: Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions* or Judith Grisel's (2020) *Never Enough*, and complete a critical book review. (6-8 pages double-spaced, 12-point font with one-inch margins). Please provide a summary of the book's content, reflect on how it impacted you, and interact with the material. What is one important takeaway that you will bring into your practice of spiritual caregiving, psycho-spiritual therapeutic practice, or ministry? How does this book fit into the genre of addictions, and who would benefit from reading this book? And what are the strengths, weaknesses or limitations of the book? Due Thursday, May 28, 2026*

Self-Help Group Reflection (15%): Students are to attend an open self-help group of their choosing (i.e., an AA program). After attending the meeting, students will prepare a five-page, double-spaced reflection about the experience. Describe the thoughts and emotions you experienced before going into the meeting, during the meeting, and leaving the meeting. Without writing any identifiers of the people in attendance, what did you notice during the meeting – the roles of different members, various behaviours of members, accessibility of the location, reactions of others to your presence, structure of the meeting? How does your experience fit with your readings on self-help resources? Based on your experience, how would you prepare a client to increase their likelihood of attending after the first visit? In an appendix to your paper, list the self-help resources for addictions within a 30 km distance of where you live. (Assignment adapted from Debra Kostyk's syllabus on Addictions and Social Work Practice, Booth University College). Due Thursday, June 18, 2026.

(3) Final Case Study Paper (40%) – Case Study based on a movie character (40%): Students are required to demonstrate integration of the course materials by applying their learning to a case study based on a movie character. Two movies will be provided. Students will watch their chosen film one or more times to become familiar with the main character and their experience with addiction. You will take on the role of a therapist that the client is seeing, although this is not identified in the movie. It is a character study in addiction. You will write a case study as if this person were your client. Students will demonstrate their assessment skills, especially in employing psycho-spiritual assessment and in planning care/therapy strategy. **Prior to Week 7, students will submit a brief 1–2 page case formulation memo** outlining their preliminary psycho-spiritual assessment of the character and their initial treatment rationale, which will guide the development of the final case study paper. Students should briefly identify two key scenes from the film that most strongly informed their assessment. The memo will be incorporated into the final case study paper and may be revised as the student's analysis develops. The final case study paper will be **25 pages, double-spaced (including the title page, the revised case formulation memo, the bibliography, and the appendix)**. Please cite sources using APA7 style. Students will include references to research articles or books in their assessment and intervention sections.

Due June 28, 2026

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000, and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale:

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable

Policies

Class attendance. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner congruent with the vocation they are seeking to enter and in which they desire to give leadership. To that end, it is a regulation of Knox College that a minimum of 80% attendance in courses (6 of 8 weeks) is required for credit; 100% attendance is expected in seminar courses. Habitual lateness for class will be counted as absence.

Teaching and learning are interactive, not passive, activities. Therefore, students may not “attend” an in-person class through unauthorized audio or video streaming or by watching or listening to a recording; instructors are not obligated to record or permitted to stream their in-person classes. Online classes with a synchronous video component require the same level of attendance as an in-person course, and students may not “attend” by watching or listening to a recording. Online classes with an asynchronous component require participation in all activities for each week or module to meet the attendance requirement. Students requiring accommodations to attend class must present medical and/or Accessibility Services documentation outlining the type and duration of the required accommodation(s).

Class recording. Much of the learning that takes place in the in-person classroom is founded on mutual disclosure between instructor and student and among students. Parties outside of this learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. A student without an approved accommodation who wishes to make an audio recording of an in-person class must secure the instructor’s and all classmates’ agreement; livestreaming and video recordings are not permitted. Personal recordings may be used only by the student who made the recording; no recording may be reproduced, posted, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to submit assignments by the date specified in the course outline. The penalty for late work is 2% per day. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted, assigning a zero to the work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistent with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/>

[secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012](#), policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Inclusive Language. Knox College has an inclusive language policy, available at https://knox.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Knox-College-Policy_Use-of-Language-Policy-and-Glossary_221003.pdf.

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to their head of college or delegate according to the Graduate program Handbook linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges: <https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

Where **generative AI** technologies are used, students should ensure proper attribution and understanding of any content or reasoning drawn from these tools, and be prepared to discuss or defend their work.

Other academic offences. TST students are subject to the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>).

Back-up copies. Please make backup copies of assignments before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may send important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs must have a valid Utoronto email address. Students must have set up their Utoronto email address, which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions about your UTORid and password. Students should check their Utoronto email regularly for course updates. **Forwarding** your Utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, or other email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail, or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, so emails from me may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to student emails in a timely manner. All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a Utoronto email address. Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and the instructor cannot readily identify them as legitimate student emails. The instructor is not obliged to respond to emails from non-Utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should use only the email address they provided to their college of registration.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Basic Degrees – Knox and TST

<i>This course has the following course-level learning outcomes</i>	
Outcome	Evaluation
1. Students will be able to describe one or more counselling modalities in detail and demonstrate foundational knowledge of the tenets of the modality	Video presentation, final paper and class discussion
2. Students will reflect on the key concepts of transference, boundaries and supervision and how these impact the therapeutic relationship as well as their future practice	Book review, class discussion
3. Students will <i>be able to describe the concepts of spirituality, spiritual care and spiritually-integrated psychotherapy, self-awareness, and SEUS (Safe and Effective Use of Self).</i> And begin to articulate their growing sense of professional identity as spiritually-integrated practitioners.	Class discussion and final paper
4. Students will communicate clearly in written and oral forms. Students will use APA7 style in their papers for citations. Students will explore therapeutic concepts and how they are integrated into practice	Book review, video presentation and final paper

<i>A student successfully completing this course has made progress towards the following Knox College degree program learning outcomes:</i>		
MDiv	MTS	MPS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interprets Scripture and Christian tradition (Reformed), using a variety of methods, sources, and norms, to preach, teach, write, and to provide care and witness. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge at a basic level in various theological disciplines. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge at a basic level in various theological disciplines, in the Reformed or another tradition. [* the student may come from another tradition] <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates skills in creative, faith-centred, adaptive, and innovative leadership for current and emerging communities of faith. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finds, selects, reads, and appropriately integrates theological information. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates knowledge and skills in spiritual care and therapy, grounded in appropriate theories, for professional practice and leadership in community and institutional settings. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhances the vocational and spiritual development, practices, and well-being of self and others. (See Professional and Critical Competencies.) <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engages respectfully and constructively in a theological community of scholarship. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates an appropriate spiritual and professional identity formation in relation to specialized practice. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analyzes and evaluates social, cultural, and community contexts to enable communities of faith to participate in God’s work and justice in a diverse and changing world. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writes and speaks in English sufficiently well to engage in theological discourse. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writes and speaks in English sufficiently well to engage in professional practice. <i>Evaluation:</i> Participation, Course Assignments, Final Paper

TST BASIC “DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS”	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES (see college outcomes above)	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
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EXPECTATIONS: *In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:*

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of addiction counseling, including theoretical models, assessment techniques, treatment modalities, and the integration of spirituality in therapeutic contexts.	Participation in weekly discussions, completion of assigned readings, Course Assignments and the final case study paper.
2. Knowledge of methodologies	Students will engage with methodologies such as Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) to assess and treat addiction.	Experiential learning in motivational interviewing, analysis in Course Assignments and application in the final case study.
3. Application of Knowledge	Students will apply knowledge of addiction counseling theories and methodologies to real-world scenarios, including assessments and therapeutic planning.	Article summary presentation, self-help group reflection, and the final case study paper.

TST BASIC “DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS”	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES (see college outcomes above)	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
4. Communication Skills	Students will demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication through seminar presentations, book reviews, and a research-based final paper.	Course Assignments book review assignments, and the final case study paper following APA7 guidelines.
5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	Students will critically reflect on the scope and limitations of addiction counseling theories and spiritual care practices.	Class discussions on theoretical models, Course Assignments and reflection assignments
6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity	Students will cultivate professional autonomy by integrating self-awareness, safe and effective use of self, and professional identity formation into their practice.	Participation in experiential activities, self-help group reflection paper, and final case study.