MASTER OF ARTS IN PASTORAL COUNSELING (M.A.)

Purpose
The Department of Community Care and Counseling's Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling provides students with an academic program designed to equip students with a biblical worldview of human behavior and application of helping skills. Students will master coursework and review the literature in the field considered essential to the master's level preparation of ministry-based workers who seek to offer services in areas such as addictions and recovery, pastoral counseling, marriage and family, leadership, life coaching, etc., that are consistent with a biblical worldview. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own specific needs and to take advantage of available resources for personal and professional development as they seek a degree relevant to the field of pastoral counseling which is a non-licensed profession in the majority of the United States.

Program Learning Outcomes
The student will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast theoretically informed pastoral counseling strategies.
2. Articulate an understanding of pastoral counseling that rests on solid theological/psychological/spiritual principles.
3. Integrate critical thinking skills in the practice of Christian scholarship.
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the role and importance of pastoral counseling within the discipline of Counseling.

Program Specific Admission Requirements
In addition to the general admission procedures, applicants to the Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling must meet the following requirements:

1. Earned baccalaureate degree or its equivalent (in any field) from an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (e.g., SACSCOC, TRACS, ABHE, etc.). Applicants who hold a prior degree from an unaccredited institution may be considered for admission on Academic Caution.
2. First-time applicants are asked to submit a written recommendation from a pastor.
3. Minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.0 (on a 4.00 scale).

Transfer of Credit
Students may transfer up to 18 hours of coursework into the Pastoral Counseling program. For a transferred course to replace a Liberty University course, the following requirements must be met:

1. The school at which the course was taken must be appropriately accredited.
2. The course credit must be at least three semester hours or five quarter hours.
3. The student must have earned a grade of C- or better in the course.
4. The course must overlap one of Liberty's courses by at least 80%.

Courses related to counseling that meet all but the last criterion may be transferred in as elective courses. Course work must have been completed within the previous 10 years. Transfer credits will not be accepted for the following courses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PACO 500</td>
<td>Introduction to Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 501</td>
<td>Foundational Doctrines for Pastoral Counselors</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 509</td>
<td>Spiritual Formation in Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 617</td>
<td>Theories and Techniques in Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACO 699</td>
<td>Pastoral Counseling Internship</td>
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Credit will not be awarded for life experience or continuing education workshops.

Graduation Requirements
In addition to the other regulations governing graduation, students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling program must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete a minimum of 36 hours.
2. A maximum of 50% of the program hours may be transferred if approved and allowable, including credit from an earned degree from Liberty University on the same academic level.
3. 2.50 GPA
4. No grade of D may be applied to the degree (includes grades of D+ and D-)
5. For information regarding the repeat policy, please refer to "Course Repeat Policy" in the Academic Information and Policies section of this Catalog.
6. Liberty University course work that is more than ten (10) years old may not be applied towards this degree. Students are required to repeat the course if it has exceeded the age limit.
7. Degree must be completed within 5 years.
8. Submission of Degree Completion Application must be completed within the last semester of a student's anticipated graduation date.

Programs of Study
Delivery Format: Online Only
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Addictions & Recovery
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Community Chaplaincy
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Dobson Center Family Advocacy, Public Policy & the Future
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Dobson Center Marriage & Family Studies
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Dobson Center Parenting & Child/Adolescent Development
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Life Coaching
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Military Resilience

Delivery Format: Residential and Online
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Crisis Response & Trauma
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Discipleship & Church Ministry
Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling (M.A.)

- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Leadership
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Marriage & Family
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Pastoral Counseling
- Pastoral Counseling (M.A.) - Theology

Career Opportunities
- Associate pastor
- Counselor
- Lay leader
- Missionary
- Youth pastor

Courses

**PACO 500 Introduction to Pastoral Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
This course introduces students to a solution-based model for short-term counseling that incorporates knowledge of and practice in facilitation skills, cognitive behavioral approaches, and biblical teaching.

**PACO 501 Foundational Doctrines for Pastoral Counselors** 3 Credit Hours
This course is a study of systematic theology that will give attention to the doctrines of the Bible, God, humanity, sin, Christ, Holy Spirit, salvation, the church and last things. The course will provide the student the theological foundations to serve and counsel more effectively in the local church and community contexts.

**PACO 504 Multicultural Issues in Pastoral Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
**Prerequisites:** PACO 500 and PACO 501
This course introduces students to the constructs of Ethnicity, Families, and Counseling. It focuses on the contribution of ethnic background to family makeup and functioning. Major ethnic minorities are studied along with the counseling approaches appropriate to each.

**PACO 506 Integration of Psychology and Theology** 3 Credit Hours
This course introduces students to the process of pastoral counseling with a variety of religious clients who would define themselves as evangelical Christians. The course provides a systematic overview of Christian doctrines, a discussion of various theological viewpoints regarding those doctrines, and an examination of how psychological and theological concepts relate to each other.

**PACO 507 Theology and Spirituality in Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
An examination of the content, comprehensiveness, and validity of several counseling theories that have been developed by prominent Christian counselors.

**PACO 509 Spiritual Formation in Pastoral Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
**Prerequisites:** PACO 500 and PACO 501
This course introduces students to the essential elements of a biblically responsible, research informed, holistic approach to his/her spiritual formation. The goals, means, and challenges faced in the process of transformation, especially within pastoral counseling, will comprise the major issues covered in class.

**PACO 597 Seminar** 1-3 Credit Hours
PACO 597/COUN 597 - Seminar (1 to 3 hours)

**PACO 603 Premarital and Marital Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
This course introduces students to the factors contributing to successful marital relationships. The course also teaches students to carry out short-term methods that can be used when those kinds of problems develop. Students will be challenged to articulate a clinically informed biblical counseling approach to pre-marital counseling. (Formerly PACO 610)

**PACO 604 Crisis Intervention in Pastoral Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
**Prerequisites:** PACO 500 and PACO 501
This course introduces students to the theories and skills required to provide pastoral crisis intervention and counseling that will cultivate resiliency and promote spiritual growth.

**PACO 611 Counseling the Child and Their Families** 3 Credit Hours
The developmental and psychological needs and problems of children are examined through the analysis of personality types and family structure. Counseling techniques (e.g. play therapy) for children are also examined.

**PACO 615 Marriage and Family Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
**Prerequisites:** PACO 500 and PACO 501
This course introduces students to the dynamics of marriage and family relationships. Emphasis is on understanding the structure and function of marriage, the various aspects of the marital relationship, family systems, and the ways the counselor may approach marriage and family counseling as a creative, preventative, and healing ministry.

**PACO 617 Theories and Techniques in Pastoral Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
**Prerequisites:** PACO 500 and PACO 501
This course introduces students to selected theories of counseling and psychotherapy. It involves an intensive pastoral counseling experience designed to enhance self-awareness, promote personality exploration, and provide case discussion and analysis. Fundamentals of the therapeutic relationship and essential skills are examined.

**PACO 618 Advanced Marriage and Family Counseling** 3 Credit Hours
**Prerequisites:** PACO 500 and PACO 501 and PACO 615
This course is an exploration of selected major treatment approaches utilized in marital and family counseling. Development of practical skills, interventions, and techniques constitute the primary focus. (Formerly PACO 602).
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 620</td>
<td>Counseling the Adolescent and Their Families</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PACO 500 and PACO 501</td>
<td>This course examines the transitions of adolescence emphasizing family, social, spiritual/moral, and physical issues. Counseling theories and practices for working with adolescents are explored. Opportunities for application of theory are provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 622</td>
<td>Counseling the Child and Adolescent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>This course introduces students to the developmental transitions of childhood and adolescence emphasizing family, social, spiritual/moral, and physical issues. Counseling theories and practices for working with children and adolescents are explored. Opportunities for application of theory are provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 625</td>
<td>Healthy Sexuality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PACO 500 and PACO 501</td>
<td>This course introduces students to a research informed biblical paradigm for healthy sexuality. It will increase their awareness, knowledge, and skills regarding the broad range of issues in the field of counseling when addressing healthy sexuality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 630</td>
<td>Gerontology and Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>This course introduces students to the issues and problems unique to the elderly in American society. Topics such as grief and loss, suffering, societal attitude, and family structure are examined.</td>
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<td>PACO 687</td>
<td>Counseling Women</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PACO 500 and PACO 501</td>
<td>This course examines the most common problems women bring to counseling, including both developmental and situational crises. It explores biblical perspectives and the most effective treatments for these situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 695</td>
<td>Directed Research in Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Designed for the advanced student in good standing who has demonstrated an ability to work independently. The student will work with the instructor in developing a proposal for guided research in a specified area of counseling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 697</td>
<td>Seminar in Pastoral Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Offered: Resident</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACO 698</td>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>COUN 501 and COUN 502 and COUN 503 and COUN 504 and COUN 505 and COUN 506 and COUN 507 and COUN 510 and COUN 512 and COUN 521 and COUN 601 and COUN 646 and COUN 667</td>
<td>Students will complete supervised counseling and counseling-related experiences in a professional setting. The primary focus is the development of counseling skills.</td>
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<td>PACO 699</td>
<td>Pastoral Counseling Internship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>THEO 510 and PACO 500 and PACO 504 and PACO 509 and PACO 603 and PACO 604 and PACO 617</td>
<td>This course offers student participation in a pastoral counseling experience under supervision in an approved setting along with supervision by a university faculty member.</td>
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