

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice. The information below is provided as a guide for course selection and is not binding in any form, and should not be used to purchase course materials.

COURSE SYLLABUS

DBFA 610

DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND BLENDED FAMILIES

COURSE DESCRIPTION

With a sensitivity to the multiple factors contributing to the breakdown of a family, this course draws upon the current findings in the marriage and family, as well as the psychological, literature to identify significant ramifications and outcomes of divorce on family members. Further attention is given to the reconstructed family, exposing those treatment found to be most efficacious for stability and satisfaction.

RATIONALE

The last four decades have yielded a plethora of evidence as to the prevalence, leading causal factors, and psychological, as well as sociological implications of the cultural phenomenon that has reached epidemic statistical proportions. Despite a range of ideological perspectives attempting to give explanation to the condition, there is a strong and growing need for human service professionals to better understand how the individual members of a family are affected by the loss of its integrity and stability. This course builds on the existing Judeo-Christian understanding of family as foundational to society, but goes further in its exploration of how best to intervene in the wake of a divorce to re-stabilize the members affected and equip those same individuals for future involvement in marriage and family without being unduly jeopardized by the original break.

I. PREREQUISITE

For information regarding prerequisites for this course, please refer to the [Academic Course Catalog](#).

II. REQUIRED RESOURCE PURCHASE

Click on the following link to view the required resource(s) for the term in which you are registered: <http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/liberty.htm>

III. ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

- A. Computer with basic audio/video output equipment
- B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
- C. Blackboard [recommended browsers](#)
- D. Microsoft Office

IV. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- A. Identify realities of the current state of marriages in America.
- B. Recognize and describe relationship patterns of disconnected and unsatisfied marriages, as well as individual and relational variables that predict divorce.
- C. Identify the emotional and relational processes and consequences of divorce for adults and children.
- D. Describe the legal process and requirements associated with divorce.
- E. Develop a personal hermeneutic of divorce and remarriage based on Scripture.
- F. Recognize the effects of marital conflict, divorce, child maltreatment and remarriage on children.
- G. Identify the common issues children have following parental divorce and describe strategies for healthy adjustment.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Textbook readings and lecture presentations/notes
- B. Course Requirements Checklist

After reading the Course Syllabus and [Student Expectations](#), the student will complete the related checklist found in Module/Week 1.

- C. Discussion Board Forums (4)

Discussion boards are collaborative learning experiences. Therefore, the student is required to create a thread in response to the provided prompt for each forum. Each thread must be at least 400 words and demonstrate course-related knowledge (Dr. Dobson's assigned works and/or the core text, as well as video/audio content). In addition to the thread, the student is required to reply to at least 2 other classmates' threads. Each reply must be at least 200 words.

- D. Structured Interview Paper

The student will locate a mental health professional or pastoral counselor actively involved in counseling divorced and remarried couples and blended families in the student's local area. The student will prepare at least 10 questions for a 45–60-minute interview with the professional, and then summarize his/her findings in a 6–8 page summary (not including Title Page) in current APA style documenting the interview, including a copy of the questions asked.

Potential Questions:

- From your experience, what are some of the most prevalent reasons couples divorce?
- What are the most common challenges you see in the first three months following separation?

- Do you recommend temporary separation as a technique in helping keep couples married? Why or why not?
- What are the biggest adjustments couples have to make during separation? Divorce? Remarriage?
- When and how do you tend to see the effects of divorce manifest in children?
- What are the most difficult adjustments you see in two families coming together?
- How do you counsel divorced individuals with kids to begin dating again? What do recommend for that process? What common mistakes do you see being made?
- What is your personal theology of divorce and remarriage? How does it fit with what you see and experience in your practice?

E. Research Paper

The student will select a research topic related to Divorce, Remarriage, and Blended Families. Students will complete a minimum 10-page research paper in current APA format related to the focus of the course and course material. The paper should be a minimum of 10 pages in length (not including Title Page and References page) and follow APA guidelines, with at least 10 supporting sources from peer reviewed research/journal articles.

F. Quizzes (2)

Each quiz will cover the Reading & Study, Video, and Audio material for the assigned modules/weeks. Each quiz will be open-book/open-notes, contain 10 short answer questions, with no time limit to complete.

G. 4-MAT Papers

Student will submit 4–5 page 4-MAT papers for *Helping Children Survive Divorce*, and for *The Smart Stepfamily*. The 4-MAT REVIEW system is a way of responding to readings that requires the learner to interact with new ideas on several levels. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric are available in Blackboard.

VI. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES

A. Points

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Course Requirements Checklist | 10 |
| Discussion Board Forums (4 at 50 pts ea) | 200 |
| Structured Interview | 200 |
| Research Paper | 200 |
| Quiz 1 (<i>Love Must Be Tough</i>) | 50 |
| Quiz 2 (<i>Surviving & Thriving</i>) | 50 |
| 4-MAT Paper (<i>Helping Children Survive</i>) | 150 |
| 4-MAT Paper (<i>The Smart Stepfamily</i>) | 150 |
| Total | 1010 |

B. Scale

A = 940–1010 A- = 920–939 B+ = 900–919 B = 860–899 B- = 840–859
C+ = 820–839 C = 780–819 C- = 760–779 D+ = 740–759 D = 700–739
D- = 680–699 F = 0–679

C. Dual Relationship

The faculty is responsible to interact with counseling students in a supervisory capacity/role. As such, faculty may provide students professional principles, guidance, and recommendations as it relates to the context of the student-client setting. The faculty is responsible to avoid dual relationships with students such as entering a student-counselor or student-pastor relationship. Thus, the faculty does not provide personal counseling addressing student personal problems. If a faculty member perceives that a student is in need of personal or professional counseling, then that faculty member will recommend that the student pursue either pastoral or professional assistance from a counselor in their community.

D. Limits of Confidentiality

In the event of a student's disclosure, either verbally or in writing, of threat of serious or foreseeable harm to self or others, abuse or neglect of a minor, elderly or disabled person, or current involvement in criminal activity, the faculty, staff, administrator, or supervisor will take immediate action. This action may include, but is not limited to, immediate notification of appropriate state law enforcement or social services personnel, emergency contacts, and notification of the appropriate program chair or online dean. The incident and action taken will become part of the student's permanent record.

E. Disability Statement

Students with a documented disability may contact Liberty University Online's Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) at LUOODAS@liberty.edu to make arrangements for academic accommodations. Further information can be found at www.liberty.edu/disabilitysupport.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DBFA 610

Textbooks: Deal, R. *The Smart Stepfamily: The Seven Steps to a Healthy Family* (2014).
 Dobson, J. *Love Must be Tough: New Hope for Marriages in Crisis* (2007).
 Hart, A. *Helping Children Survive Divorce: What to Expect; How to Help* (1997).
 Papernow, P. L. *Surviving and Thriving in Stepfamily Relationships* (2013).

| MODULE/ WEEK | READING & STUDY | ASSIGNMENTS | POINTS |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Dobson: ch.1-4 Hart: ch. 1-7 Bible Readings 2 presentations 1 audio clip | Course Requirements Checklist Class Introductions DB Forum 1 | 10 0 50 |
| 2 | Dobson: ch. 5-9 Hart: ch. 8-14 2 presentations 2 audio clips | 4-MAT Paper: Hart Research Paper: Topic Selection | 150 0 |
| 3 | Dobson: ch. 10-13 Papernow: ch. 1-2 Deal: ch. 1-4 3 presentations | Structured Interview | 200 |
| 4 | Dobson: ch. 14-17 Papernow: ch. 3-4 Deal: ch 5-8 1 presentation 1 audio clip | DB Forum 2 Quiz 1 | 50 50 |
| 5 | Papernow: ch. 5-6 Deal: ch. 9-12 1 presentation 5 audio clips | 4-MAT Paper: Deal | 150 |
| 6 | Papernow: ch. 7, 12-13 2 presentations 1 audio clip | DB Forum 3 | 50 |

| MODULE/ WEEK | READING & STUDY | ASSIGNMENTS | POINTS |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 7 | Papernow: ch. 8–11 2 presentations | Research Paper | 200 |
| 8 | Papernow: 14–18 2 presentations | DB Forum 4 Quiz 2 | 50 50 |
| TOTAL | | | 1010 |

DB= Discussion Board

NOTE: Each course week begins on Monday morning at 12:00 a.m. (ET) and ends on Sunday night at 11:59 p.m. (ET). The final week ends at 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Friday.