The Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy and Master of Arts in Counseling programs will equip students with a biblical foundation and a Christian perspective coupled with therapeutic skills through the achievement of three objectives. These objectives are supported by specific outcomes.

A Note on the Similarities and Differences Between the Masters of Arts in Counseling (MACo) and the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) Degree Programs

Students in the MAMFT and MACo degree programs are peers in the same classes and supervised therapy groups conducted by the same faculty. Both programs conceptualize problem formation and problem resolution from a systemic perspective.

The difference between the two programs is in part determined by the individual student. The MAMFT program is designed for the trainee who has a particular vocational focus. Specifically, the student wants to pursue a career path eventually leading to licensure as a marriage and family therapist.

Persons in the MACo program may use their course of study, with its generous number of elective hours, to credential themselves as systemically informed counselors, to augment their present professional activity, or for their own personal growth and service. A key intention is to allow the MACo student a flexibility which the specific focus of the MAMFT degree program might not allow.

Objective:
- Conceptualize human problems within a family systems framework, informed by a Christian understanding of biblical truth

Outcomes:
- Ability to demonstrate a beginning understanding of major family therapy concepts
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the tradition of Christian thought and current trends in Christian systematic theology

Objective:
- Awareness, attitudes, and therapy skills needed to assess, diagnose, and treat various human problems within this same systemic structure

Outcomes:
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of behavior disorders
Demonstrate beginning skill levels in the following areas:
  - Relationship skills
  - Structuring skills
  - Ability to conduct an initial session
  - Constructing genograms
  - Tracking interactional sequences
  - Conducting initial telephone calls to clients

- Ability to present a case in clear coherent fashion
- Ability to manage risks, crises and emergencies
- Ability to maintain leadership in a session with clients
- Ability to develop goals, hypotheses, and strategies for cases
- Ability to appropriately intervene with individuals, couples, families, and other relationship structures
- Ability to assess the client, the therapeutic relationship, and one’s own role as therapist
- Ability to maintain clear and concise up to date case notes

Objective:
  - Ability to function as informed entry practitioners in various religious and secular settings

Outcomes:
- Basic understanding of the content of biblical literature
- Ability to discuss one’s preferred theory of family therapy
- Ability to articulate one’s own theory of therapeutic change
- Demonstration of personal maturity and responsibility as evidenced by appropriate accommodation to the needs and perspectives of clients, peers, and supervisors
- Ability to articulate personal and professional goals
- Willingness to set appropriate boundaries and manage issues of triangulation
- Demonstration of emotional stability
- Demonstration of ability to abide by the AAMFT code of professional ethics in dealing with cases
- Demonstration of basic professionalism, including appropriate dress, and appropriate representation of self, the clinical setting, and the profession