School of

COUNSELLING

- Master of Counselling
- Graduate Diploma of Counselling
- Graduate Certificate in Counselling

EXCELSIA

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

About
EXCELSIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Established in 1983, Excelsia University College (Excelsia) is one of Australia's leading Christian higher education providers, and is an innovative and creative community of people who are passionate about excelling and growing academically, professionally, personally and spiritually. Our students and alumni embark on a journey of lifelong learning and leadership.

WORLD-CLASS MENTORSHIP

Be mentored by and learn from engaged and committed staff who are approachable and passionate about counselling.

PASTORAL CARE

Excelsia prioritises pastoral care which is fully integrated throughout the program. It is important to Excelsia that we meet the personal, social, wellbeing and academic needs of students.

ACCREDITATION

With PACFA and ACA accreditation, students study at the peak level of academic quality and cutting-edge practice, all in a uniquely supportive environment.

COUNSELLING WITH A DIFFERENCE

With a strong emphasis placed on student growth and experiential learning, a postgraduate degree from Excelsia will impress employers and make students' resumes pop.

OUR VISION: Excelsia contributes to making a better world through active participation in a life-transforming global Christian learning community.

OUR MISSION: Excelsia is an academic community benefiting the world by producing research characterised by exemplary scholarship consistent with a Christian world view, and graduates prepared to lead in a range of professions.

OUR VALUES

Our values reflect our vision and our mission:

1. **Christ-likeness:** striving to exemplify the life of Christ in our commitments, our actions and our relationships.
2. **Innovation and creativity:** working with passion and imagination in a range of influential professions, to further God's transformative work in the world.
3. **Scholarship:** creating a culture that values the search for truth, supports academic freedom and rewards rigorous thinking.
4. **Service to the community:** using our skills and abilities in and beyond the Institution in the service of others.
5. **Lifelong learning:** continually seeking knowledge, wisdom and capability to flourish and contribute in a changing world.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

1. **Deep Knowledge**
   A deep, coherent and extensive knowledge of studied disciplines characterised by intellectual openness, creativity and curiosity.
2. **Critical Analysis**
   Willingness and ability to analyse issues logically, consider different options and viewpoints fairly, and make informed decisions in relevant artistic, academic and/or professional contexts and settings.
3. **Lifelong Learning**
   A commitment to lifelong learning characterised by a willingness and ability to acquire, develop and apply knowledge and skills that facilitate positive adaptations to a changing world.
4. **Effective Communication**
   Aptitude to communicate information, arguments and ideas effectively and ethically through writing, speech and/or artistic expression as appropriate within each discipline.
5. **Christian Ethical Action**
   A sound knowledge and understanding of Christian values and beliefs, and of the relevance of Christian faith to personal life, professional ethics, and social concerns.
6. **Self Direction**
   A capacity for self-directed learning and activity while working effectively with others in scholarly, vocational, civic and/or artistic pursuits and endeavours.
7. **Technical Competence**
   Competence and facility with materials, processes and technologies relevant to learned disciplines, generic information literacy and professional practice.
8. **Responsible Innovation**
   Oriented towards exhibiting intellectual and artistic enterprise, innovation and independence in constructive, creative and responsible ways.

CAMPUS FEATURES

CAMPUS FEATURES

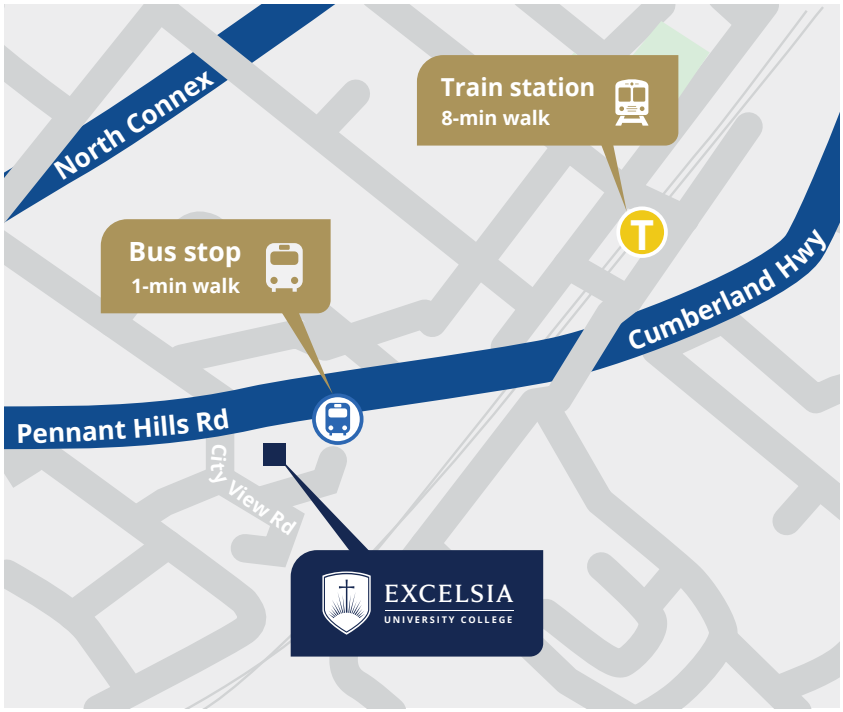
- Library
- Black box creative space
- Production studio
- Innovation centre – Mac and PC lab
- Drama and music specialist rooms
- Wellness centre
- Fidèl Café
- Koorong Bookstore
- Student facilities

Free wifi
Study desks
Snacks bar
Free coffee
Microwaves
Games console

TRANSPORT

- 8-min walk to Pennant Hills Station
- 1-min walk to bus stop
- Free parking

CONVENIENT LOCATION



Why study at **EXCELSIA?**

EXCELSIA RANKED HIGHLY

TEACHING QUALITY*
86.2%
National average 80.5%

POSITIVE STUDENT INTERACTIONS*
84.6%
National average 59.5%

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT*
90.7%
National average 81.1%

OVERALL GRADUATE SATISFACTION^
85.4%
National average 75.6%

^ 2023–24 Course Experience Questionnaire (undergraduate)
* 2023–24 Student Experience Survey (undergraduate)

"Integrity, exacting and encouraging are the words I would use to describe Excelsia. In this midway space between having graduated once, to having more advanced qualifications in a year's time, what I've come to appreciate about Excelsia is that there seems to be a desire to help students and a desire for these bonds to continue even after graduation. I know lecturers are very happy to share their knowledge, expertise and give their time to students when they're facing difficulties. Particularly in the world of counselling, you might need to talk about difficult approaches or tricky clients and so far I've only found people's doors to be open, which has been very helpful in learning with the day-to-day problems of trying to be a counsellor."

— Yannick Lawry
Graduate Certificate in Counselling alumnus

> “In my two years of studying counselling at Excelsia I have learned a tremendous amount of interesting things about myself, people and the world. I have made new friendships that I hope will last a lifetime. I have felt included and embraced just the way I am.
>
> The best things about the program are its diversity and small classes, which allow for a personal touch and a better perspective and interactive way of learning.”
>
> — Anastasia
> Master of Counselling alumnus

Master of
COUNSELLING

The Master of Counselling, a program accredited by the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) and Australian Counselling Association (ACA), aims to develop essential clinical competencies, foster reflective awareness and provide a sound theoretical foundation for a career as a professional counsellor. The degree integrates contemporary counselling theory, research and practice, contextualised within a Christian world view and a mental health framework. It develops counsellors who understand the personal, cultural, relational, psychological, social and spiritual domains of human experience and functioning; who are professionally and ethically informed; who will be sensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of individuals, families, and communities; and who will value and promote the dignity, potential and wellbeing of all people.

Course duration:	2 years full-time 4 years part-time (domestic students only)
Intake:	February and July
Credit points:	96 (16 units)
Delivery:	On campus
Available to:	Domestic and international
Course accreditation:	PACFA and ACA
CRICOS Code:	056057J
IELTS:	7.0 with no band less than 6.5
AQF:	Level 9
Financial information:	FEE-HELP available for domestic students
Course tuition fee:	International students: $11,072 semester/ $44,288 total tuition fee

For more information, refer to our course fees page.

Graduate Diploma of
COUNSELLING

The Graduate Diploma of Counselling is a program accredited by the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) ideal for anyone in a helping, allied health, educational, ministry, and/or community support and welfare profession who desires to integrate counselling skills and mental health knowledge into their current vocation. The course also prepares graduates to be entry-level counsellors, able to obtain professional association membership and employment within the counselling sector. Students are exposed to contemporary theory, research, and clinical practice, equipping them to confidently provide quality relational care and support to those encountering life difficulties in an empathic, ethical and therapeutic manner.

Course duration:	1 year full-time 2 years part-time (domestic students only)
Intake:	February and July
Credit points:	48 (8 units)
Delivery:	On campus
Available to:	Domestic and international
Course accreditation:	ACA
CRICOS Code:	056056K
IELTS:	6.5 with no band less than 6.0
AQF:	Level 8
Financial information:	FEE-HELP available for domestic students
Course tuition fee:	International students: $11,072 semester/ $22,144 total tuition fee

For more information, refer to our course fees page.

Graduate Certificate in COUNSELLING

The Graduate Certificate in Counselling is ideal for those wanting to explore counselling as a new career or vocation direction, with completion of the course providing time to determine if their interest in counselling merits further study. The course may also be of interest to those in helping-related professions whose occupations include an incidental counselling component (e.g. education, ministry, nursing, occupational therapy, pastoral work, policing, paramedics etc.), providing an opportunity for them to improve or extend their current relational skill set by learning how to counsel and support others more effectively. The course is also helpful for those without prior undergraduate studies who are interested in counselling and would like to determine if they can manage post-graduate level studies.

Course duration:	1 year part-time/6 months full-time*
Intake:	February and July
Credit points:	24
Delivery:	On campus
Available to:	Domestic
IELTS:	6.5 with no band less than 6.0
AQF:	Level 8
Financial information:	FEE-HELP available for domestic students

* Full-time option available in February intake only
For more information, refer to our course fees page.

WHY STUDY COUNSELLING AT EXCELSIA?

PACFA™ Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia Accredited Course

ACA RECOGNISED TRAINING

READY FOR PRACTICE (Master)

- PACFA and ACA accredited – industry recognised
- Upon graduation ready to practice as a counsellor
- Integrating a Christian world view with contemporary counselling theory, research and reflective clinical practice
- From March 2026, the course includes 200 total hours of Work Integrated Learning (WIL), comprising 80 hours of direct client contact in line with the 2025 PACFA Accreditation Standards.
- State-of-the-art counselling facility

INDUSTRY-RESPECTED

- PACFA (Master) and ACA (Master and Graduate Diploma) accredited, equipped with a range of clinical frameworks, skills and professional values central to the life of a professional counsellor
- Delivered by experienced, passionate and reflective practitioners currently in private practice, and counsellor-educators with master and PhD qualifications in counselling, psychology and psychotherapy.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATIONAL PREREQUISITES

Applicants may be admitted to Master of Counselling, Graduate Diploma of Counselling and Graduate Certificate in Counselling if they have previously successfully completed a relevant:

- bachelor degree or
- bachelor honours degree

'Relevant' means a degree that includes subjects such as psychology, social work and education where the applicant studied human motivation and behaviour. 'Non-relevant' means degrees that are science-based (not including psychology), where the applicant has not studied human motivation and behaviour.

Applicants with non-relevant degrees will be considered on the basis of their work and life experience.

APPLICANTS WITH WORK AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

Applicants without undergraduate qualifications can apply for admission via the work and life experience pathway which may consider other forms of study completed in the higher education and vocational sectors, volunteer activities, contribution to church life, or other professional development relevant to counselling. For more information refer to the Admissions Framework.

SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

All applicants will need to meet the following requirements:

- **Interview:** Successfully complete an admission interview (including a Readiness for Counselling and Psychotherapy Training Questionnaire)
- **Criminal History Record:** Provide a National Criminal History Record Check at time of application (obtainable from: nationalcrimecheck.com.au; not required for Graduate Certificate in Counselling)
- **Working with Children Check:** Provide a Working with Children authorisation at time of application (obtainable from: wwccheck.ccyp.nsw.gov.au/Applicants/Application; not required for Graduate Certificate in Counselling)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

The Master of Counselling and the Graduate Diploma of Counselling are available to international students, subject to satisfying the aforementioned admission criteria. The Certificate in Counselling is not available to international students.

For more information visit the International Student page

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

If the applicant is successful they will be issued an offer letter and a written agreement. Applicants will need to respond to the offer within six weeks. This is done online and a confirmation will be emailed back to the applicant. At this point, applicants are welcome to apply for Credit or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). If the applicant is eligible for credit or RPL, they may be exempt from completing some units and they may be able to finish their degree in a shorter amount of time.

Please refer to the credit and RPL policies and procedures in the Admissions Framework.

Master of Counselling

Graduate Diploma

FULL TIME

SEMESTER 1

Counselling Theories and Models*	Approaches to Mental Health*
Relational Dynamics*	Introduction to Counselling Skills*

2

Development and Diversity	Ethical Issues and Practice
Group Process: Theory and Practice	Research Methods

1

Counselling Practicum I	Trauma, Grief and Loss
Professional Practice	Elective 1

2

Counselling Practicum II	Specialised Counselling Skills
Elective 2	Elective 3

* Graduate Certificate

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Counselling Theories and Models

Counselling theories and models provide frameworks for conceptualising and interpreting clients' histories, issues and experiences, and are used to guide approaches for different groups and inform approaches to working with clients. Students will examine both historical and contemporary theoretical frameworks, exploring the implications of different theoretical emphases on client care. They learn how to apply theory when working with specific clients with various life challenges, and to formulate case conceptualisations which underpin client care and client outcomes.

Approaches to Mental Health

Employing a biopsychosocial-spiritual framework and associated approaches, students learn about the aetiology, diagnostic presentation, assessment and evidence-based interventions for a range of mental health issues. They reflect on personal assumptions relating to mental illness, including the relationship between spirituality and mental illness, also considering how stress and vulnerability predispose some individuals to mental health episodes. Finally, they explore the role of social and family contexts in the onset of mental health disorders and their management.

Relational Dynamics

Relational dynamics are at the heart of human engagement and communication; counsellors and clients are influenced and affected by significant relationships in their lives. Students learn about the importance of processing the adverse effects of relational experiences. This is informed by intrapersonal, interpersonal and relational theory, with an emphasis on interpersonal neurobiology, attachment and

systemic theories. Students critically reflect on their personal relationship experiences, become conversant with their own affective regulation, reflective functioning and relational capacity, and develop an understanding of how and when their own, and their clients' relational histories and current experiences may affect therapeutic outcomes.

Introduction to Counselling Skills

As a foundational unit, the aim of the Introduction to Counselling Skills unit is to develop foundational levels of counselling competence, supported by key skills required for effective clinical practice. For example, students will be introduced to core counselling concepts such as transference and counter-transference, which while originating in the psychodynamic psychotherapeutic domain, are now part of broader counselling discourse. In addition to acquiring the core counselling skills, students will learn how the core skills find expression in a range of counselling modalities.

Development and Diversity

Employing biopsychosocial and sociocultural lenses, students examine how humans grow and change across the lifespan, considering the contribution of developmental and sociocultural factors to normative outcomes. They examine major theories of human development, including the interface between the individual and their broader historical, sociocultural context. They consider how the spiritual domain affects development for those with a faith world view, and how different experiences of society and culture, including factors such as racism, bias and discrimination, oppression, power and privilege,

and prejudice can adversely affect individual development and present as clinical issues. Finally, students develop an awareness of the importance of socially and culturally sensitive counselling practice.

Ethical Issues and Practice

In this unit students learn how to ethically and responsibly manage this position, becoming conversant with all relevant regulatory codes and Australian legislative requirements that govern the health sector. They explore ethical principles in professional decision-making processes, reflect on the benefits of professional association membership, and are encouraged to be aware of, and thoughtful about, how their personal moral stance and ethical framework informs and influences their professional practice.

Group Process: Theory and Practice

This unit is designed to introduce counsellors to the therapeutic setting and experience of group work. Students are introduced to the theories of group work. The unit also aims to provide students with fundamental clinical skills used in group work, along with an understanding of how to design, implement, facilitate and assess a group program.

Throughout the unit students will have the opportunity to integrate their experiences of belonging to a group and facilitation of a group through obtaining relevant knowledge.

Across the units, students will be encouraged to develop their own unique facilitation style and cultivate the relevant group work skills in a safe, nurturing and non-judgemental context.

Research Methods

Counselling practice is underpinned by a professional body of knowledge, predominantly drawn from counselling and healthcare research. This unit aims to equip students to become knowledgeable consumers of this body of research, and to become aware of key interpretative issues relevant to research more generally. In order to equip students in this way, this unit introduces students to a range of philosophical, theoretical and practical skills and understandings necessary to design, conduct and evaluate research in counselling and related fields. Further, to be able to critically evaluate the relevance of specific contemporary research findings for professional practice, counsellors need to be conversant with how knowledge is produced and is deemed to be acceptable by a professional community. Thus,

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acquiring an understanding of the core elements of the research process and research ethics enables counsellors to thoughtfully discern whether and how specific findings may inform their clinical decision-making and client care.

Trauma, Grief and Loss

Loss and change are a normal part of the human experience, encountered by all individuals at some point in their lives. Trauma may manifest if individuals experience loss and grief. This unit examines historical and contemporary approaches to understanding advanced trauma, loss and grief. It provides students with assessment and intervention skills to work effectively in these areas of counselling. Students apply theory to assess case studies and in role-plays. The topics of vicarious trauma and burnout, and the development of self-care plans are also examined. Appropriate consideration of clients' cultural and spiritual heritages will also be explored.

Professional Practice

This unit focuses on the ongoing formation of the 'counsellor' through a range of conversations and activities intended to foster increased self-awareness and reflection, with students invited to consider how to enhance the quality of their own professional practice and nurture their ongoing personal maturity. Underpinning this learning will be an emphasis of achieving personal integration, wellness and recovery for both client and counsellor (as required).

Specialised Counselling Skills

A wide range of contemporary counselling modalities emphasise assisting clients to overcome their difficulties by changing their thinking, behaviour, and emotional responses, with the therapist and the client working together to identify and solve problems currently confronting the client. With a strong conceptual and theoretical foundation many contemporary therapies are often treatments of choice for dealing with a range of serious mental health issues, including depression and anxiety.

In Specialised Counselling Skills students will be introduced to two contemporary counselling modalities. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of key modality-specific principles and processes and to develop a capacity to apply a range of counselling skills related to the specific two modalities being taught in a given semester, with

knowledge and skills demonstrated within the classroom setting and through a range of assessment tasks.

Counselling Practicum I

Counselling Practicum I is the first of two practicum units, marking the transition from learning in the classroom setting to working as a counselling professional with clients, peers and supervisors in the general community. Students undertake their practicum in one of various community-based agency settings where they are exposed to all aspects of the work life of a professional counsellor. Students are required to demonstrate the integration and application of the professional body of knowledge and counselling skills acquired across the degree. Throughout the unit students will be required to maintain a range of counselling cases in line with the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation Australia (PACFA) Training Standards. Alongside their placement experiences, students attend a combination of individual and group supervision sessions with experienced practitioners.

Counselling Practicum II

Counselling Practicum II is the second of two units marking the ongoing transition from counselling student to professional counsellor. Throughout the unit students continue to see clients in their allocated agency setting. Students further develop their conceptual and clinical skills at a more advanced level, and are expected to demonstrate an increased sophistication, integration and maturation of their counselling knowledge and skills. Students are also expected to reflect on their professional identity, demonstrating continued professionalism in the workplace, as well as compliance with all ethical and legislative requirements relevant to practising as a professional counsellor.

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ELECTIVES

Counselling and Christianity

This unit introduces students to classical and current psychological and theological research related to counselling and counselling practice. In doing so, the unit enables and encourages students to reflect on and articulate ways in which Christian principles and clinical practice may be integrated in order to provide sensitive and comprehensive care to persons within Christian and other spiritually-oriented counselling environments.

Introduction to Counselling Children and Young People

This unit introduces attendees to the theoretical knowledge and clinical skills associated with counselling children and young people, including a range of individual, family, creative and group therapies, and learning how to appropriately select from among these therapies so as to optimise intervention strategies applied to individual clients. The unit is situated within a broader socio-ecological approach to counselling children and young people, emphasising the importance of social and cultural contexts central to client health and wellbeing (e.g. family, educational and community systems, etc.), and addressing how working with these systems is crucial for welfare, functioning and recovery of the individual child or young person. Utilising a strengths-based approach, the unit focuses on key issues such as developmental crises, disability, trauma, emotional and behavioural problems, and environmental issues. It examines how these conditions and circumstances may adversely affect clients' physical, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing and their educational attainments. Concurrently, the unit offers a mental health focus emphasising prevention, early intervention and crisis management of identified at-risk populations of children and young people.

Introduction to Family Systems and Couples

This unit examines the historical origins and contemporary applications of systemic work with families and couples therapy. It examines how the dynamics that operate between family members may contribute to symptoms experienced by vulnerable family members, particularly children and young people. Developmental and contextual factors are examined to take a trans-generational view of family functioning. Theoretical and practical applications of multiple models and theories of family and couples therapy are presented, which provide students with the opportunity to develop skills in being able to effectively assess and intervene with families and couples that present for counselling.

Introduction to Working with Addictions

Using a range of methods this unit provides a framework for counselling across a range of addictive behaviours, including addiction to alcohol and other drugs. The aim is to develop skills in assessment related to addictive behaviours and relevant counselling approaches when working with this population. The evidence for and against selected techniques is analysed. The principles of working with the voluntary and non-voluntary client is explored.

Introduction to Working Cross-Culturally

This unit provides an introduction to counselling skills with a focus on cross-cultural perspectives. Students have the opportunity to develop skills and strategies in working with diverse populations. Using a cross-cultural framework, students explore mental health stressors amongst multicultural

populations and the role of the counsellor. Students examine their own cultural identity and apply cross-cultural counselling competencies across a range of workshop activities. In considering the client's culture the counsellor-in-training must understand their own cultural values and how they shape individual biases and prejudices. An assessment of the student's own biases is essential to helping people from other cultures. A case study and research essay will form the basis of the unit assessment.

Research Project

Counselling research and counselling practice are intrinsically linked with, ideally, research findings informing day-to-day clinical decision-making in the therapeutic space. Further, developing an appreciation for and a capacity to contribute to the production of a discipline's professional knowledge is one expression of the scientist-practitioner model that underpins many allied healthcare disciplines, including counselling. In this unit students focus on their individual research activity, covering areas such as data collection, data analysis and research write-up and presentation. In doing so, they will experience research in situ including the day-to-day challenges of managing a small research project. Students will be expected to synthesise theoretical and clinical literature, and their individual endeavours will culminate in the preparation and submission of an individual, 5,000-word research paper.

Professional Project

This Professional Project unit provides students an opportunity to pursue a unique research project, the result of which is a written or creative work of around 5,000 words (or equivalent). The project will be positioned within the counselling profession. Professional projects will be informed by relevant theory, literature and research, and will demonstrate the ethical and technical requirements of the discipline. Students may work independently or within a group, employing flexibility and sound judgement.

Special Topics in Counselling

This unit provides a framework for the investigation of additional counselling-related topics that may be included in the Master of Counselling curriculum, generally in the context of the contribution of a visiting scholar with particular expertise in a given area, or new or emerging counselling issues that can usefully and substantively be addressed in a course unit.

Information about applications is available at: excelsia.edu.au/study/how-to-apply/

Step 1 Select the course
at: excelsia.edu.au/study/

Step 2 Check entry requirements

Step 3 Gather the required documents

Step 4 Complete application form

Step 5 Apply
Once you submit your application, Excelsia staff will contact you shortly to confirm receipt and talk through the next steps in the process.

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CRICOS CODE 02664K

The information contained in this course guide was accurate at the time of publication. Excelsia reserves the right to amend the material contained in this guide without notice in response to changing circumstances or for any other reason. For most up-to-date course information please visit our website.

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