

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

STMA 557 M.DIV. SYNTHESIS

Spring Quarter 2006
Hunthausen 160

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Syllabus

I. Course Description

This course assists students in integrating and articulating the theological, pastoral, and spiritual development they have experienced over the course of their studies for the M.Div. The particular quality of reflective study and group interaction adopted in the course gives participants the leisure to review what they have learned and draw that learning together around what for them are the significant and central insights they have gained. The course asks students to express that integration orally and engage in a critical discussion of it. This work of integration is brought to completion with a public oral presentation and a final synthesis paper.

II. Course Goals and Objectives

By the end of the quarter, each student will:

- review significant insights and learnings from her/his course work in the M.Div. program;
- identify and articulate the essential elements of her/his theological standpoint within the context of her/his ecclesial community;
- present this theological standpoint to other members of the class and discuss it with them;
- synthesize this exploration of her/his theological standpoint in a paper;
- create a written case study concerning pastoral practice out of her/his own experience;
- identify and articulate the core of her/his ministerial identity within the context of her/his ecclesial community;
- present this ministerial identity to all interested members of the STM community and discuss it with them;
- synthesize this exploration of her/his ministerial identity, as well as all other course activities, in a final paper that addresses a case study concerning pastoral practice written by another member of the class;
- develop and refine attitudes and practices of ongoing education and formation that will enrich her/his ministry in the years to come (especially skills of attentive reading, thoughtful and concise writing, and reasoned and compassionate discussion and conversation).

III. Texts

Consider all of your papers, textbooks, handouts, and notes from all previous courses at STM, as well as unread books crying to you to complete, novels, art museums, symphony and chamber orchestras, films, plays, water and mountains, gardens and sacred spaces. You are required to allocate three to four hours a week over the next ten weeks to the task of synthesizing – reading, re-reading, reflecting, re-creating holistically. The process will vary for each student. We will devote time during many class sessions to sharing discoveries: quotes, authors, new places and events, etc. In other words, you the students and your entire careers here at STM are the primary required texts for this course! The instructor will also assign a few carefully chosen readings to further our work of theological, pastoral, and spiritual synthesis.

IV. Student Work in the Course

Each student is responsible for the following:

- Class attendance, preparation, and participation;
- Facilitation of one class session;
- Preparation of a written case study in pastoral practice;
- Class presentation on theological standpoint;
- Oral response to another class member's presentation on theological standpoint;
- Paper on theological standpoint;
- Public presentation on ministerial identity;
- Oral response to another class member's presentation on ministerial identity;
- Final synthesis paper (with response to case study).

V. Instructor Work in the Course

The instructor is responsible for the following:

- Course planning and organization;
- Preparation of syllabus;
- Facilitation of several class sessions (when there are no student facilitators);
- Providing written and oral feedback on student presentations and papers;
- Serving as theological, pastoral, and spiritual resource throughout the course;
- Encouraging students and holding them accountable in their work of theological, pastoral, and spiritual integration and articulation.

VI. Grading

Class attendance, preparation, and participation; Class session facilitation;	
Responses to other student presentations (2); Written case study	30%
Class presentation on theological standpoint and paper	30%
Public presentation on ministerial identity	20%
Final synthesis paper	20%

VII. Schedule of Class Sessions

A. Getting Started

March 28 – Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Lent (Mark 8:1-10)

Course Organization (with review of final syllabus)
Initial Exercises in Theological, Pastoral, and Spiritual Integration

B. Theological Standpoint

April 4 – Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Lent (Mark 9:42-50)

Gathering and Sharing Resources on Theological Standpoints
Discussion of Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*,
pp. 181-238

April 11 – Tuesday in Holy Week (Mark 11:27-33)

Student Presentations, Responses, and Discussion

April 18 – Tuesday in Easter Week (Mark 16:9-20)

Student Presentations, Responses, and Discussion
Discussion of Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology*, pp. 183-196

April 25 – Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist (Mark 1:1-15)

Student Presentations, Responses, and Discussion

C. Ministerial Identity

May 2 – Tuesday in the Third Week of Easter (Matthew 3:7-12)

Gathering and Sharing Resources on Ministerial Identities
Discussion of Mark Lloyd Taylor and Carmen Renee Berry,
Loving Yourself as Your Neighbor, pp. 75-103

May 9 – Tuesday in the Fourth Week of Easter (Matthew 5:11-16)

Public Presentations, Responses, and Discussion

May 16 – Tuesday in the Fifth Week of Easter (Matthew 6:7-15)

Public Presentations, Responses, and Discussion

May 23 – Tuesday in the Sixth Week of Easter (Matthew 13:18-23)

Public Presentations, Responses, and Discussion

D. Leave Taking

May 30 – Tuesday in the Seventh Week of Easter (Matthew 8:18-27)

Concluding Reflections, Discussion, and Prayer/Ritual

VIII. Procedures and Assignments

Classroom Presence

As with other STM supervision and practicum courses, your presence is integral to this learning process. Out of respect for the quality of our group process and sharing, please plan to be on time and to attend all sessions. Any foreseeable absence needs to be negotiated with the group in advance. Please alert someone if you are ill or if an emergency arises. The STM front desk number is (206) 296-5330; Mark Taylor's office phone number is on the first page of this syllabus.

Class Session Facilitation

Each student is responsible for facilitating one session of the course. Class sessions should begin with a prayer and check-in (or welcome) led by the student facilitator of the day. Please allow the prayer to express your own spirituality and practice, as well as that of your ecclesial community. But you will also notice that a gospel reading (from the Daily Office Lectionary) is listed on the "Schedule of Class Sessions" for each session of the course. Please incorporate a reading of the assigned gospel passage somehow in your plans for the day. The student facilitator will guide the process for their class session (including timing of activities and the break). Allow a few minutes at the end to provide some act of closure. The facilitator is also responsible to arrange the classroom to provide atmosphere and to restore order after class.

Presentation One: Theological Standpoint

A. This presentation will be made before the members of the STMA 557 class.

B. Review, Preparation, and Integration

As you culminate your studies, identify the three to five most important foundations of your theological standpoint.

- Ask yourself what theologians, what strands of the biblical tradition, what elements of/stories about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, what figures from the history of the church, what liturgical practices, what ethical insights, etc., etc., do you most often find yourself quoting, referring to, returning to, being inspired by in your ministry?
- As you review the theological resources of your studies, be aware of central images: of God, of Jesus Christ, of the Spirit, the cosmos, the church, sin, grace, human creaturehood, freedom, sacraments, etc.
- Refer to key theologians and texts, quoting them strategically, as you develop your reflections. Is the theology you minister out of based on a feminist approach? process theology? liberation theology? Is Rahner's understanding of the human person central to your theology? Luther's? Calvin's? Wesley's? Whose insights into christology or God's relationship to the world help you the most? Johnson's? McFague's? Schussler-Fiorenza's? Cone's? As you develop this statement of your theological standpoint, identify areas of synthesis and name your process for "mixing and matching" elements from various sources.

STM is committed to theological reflection throughout the coursework that constitutes the Master of Divinity degree. As you consider the foundations of your theological standpoint, also work to identify the method of theological reflection you find most valuable in your ministry. (You have MTI manuals, Theology of Pastoral Leadership manuals, texts from both series of courses, and your own method developed in the last quarter of your MTI experience.) As you know, every method consists of attention to at least three elements: tradition, experience (or situation), and action. Each method defines these a little differently, each calls for different skills, but each relies on information from these three areas so that the person who reflects theologically is changed to be or to do something in a new way, with deepened understanding.

In order to emphasize the “being” as well as the “doing,” I would like to propose a fourth element: contemplation, and arrange these elements in two pairs of poles between which theology moves: **tradition – situation (or experience)** and **action – contemplation**.

For our April 4 class session, you should have identified the three to five foundations of your theological standpoint, done an initial descriptive “sketch” of them (either in pictures or writing), and be prepared BRIEFLY to speak about this material. Also, spend some time before April 4 reviewing the two or three scripture, theology, worship, and ethics courses from your time at STM that have been most influential in shaping your sense of your theological standpoint and be prepared to share one resource (book, idea, project, etc.) from each.

The primary task of the facilitator for the day on April 4 will be to shape the BRIEF sharing of these stories and resources.

C. Class Presentation

Each student will have 20 minutes to present her/his theological standpoint on April 11, 18, or 25. Primary goals should be clarity, persuasiveness, and winsomeness.

D. Suggested Schedule of Class Sessions for Presentations on Theological Standpoint (April 11, 18, and 25)

Welcome and Prayer	10 minutes
First Presentation	
Presentation	20 minutes
Response and Discussion	15 minutes
Transition/Stretch	5 minutes
Second Presentation	
Presentation	20 minutes
Response and Discussion	15 minutes
Break (around 10:30)	15 minutes
Discussion of Reading Assigned by Instructor and/or Issues Raised by Presentations	60 minutes
Closure	5 minutes

E. Response. The respondent will open the discussion and invite participation, keeping track of time and the flow of discussion (15 minutes total). Guidelines as you engage one another in discussion:

- Highlighting the strengths of what the student has presented;
- Why their insights are important;
- What theological and pastoral implications their material opens up;
- Raising questions for further thought and development;
- Seeking clarification on points that were not clear or not understood;
- Pointing to resources and strategies that will help the presenter develop her/his line of thought better.

F. Paper. Each student will write a 5-7 page paper in light of their presentation, the response and discussion with their fellow class members, and subsequent reflection. This paper is due a week after the presentation itself.

Presentation Two: Ministerial Identity

A. This will be a public presentation; all STM faculty, staff, and students will be invited.

B. Review, Preparation, and Integration

1) Choose two significant experiences, relationships, practices that have shaped your ministerial identity and leadership. Describe both:

- Name of experience, event, person, or...
- When?
- What?
- Impact on you or shaping influence?
- What deep truths have emerged from this?
- What beliefs has this caused you to rethink or let go of?
- What spiritual and/or theological themes arise out of this experience?

2) From the results of these two experiences, as you look at yourself as minister:

- What qualities, skills, and talents have become evident within you?
- Flowing from these experiences, what do you find life-giving, attracting, and compelling in relation to ministry?
- What nourishes you spiritually?
- What supports, shapes, or guides your ministry theologically?
- What de-energizes and is non-life-giving for you as a minister?
- What settings, groups, individuals draw you (ages, socio-economic, ethnic or racial backgrounds?)
- What unfinished business or issues still live in you that you are aware of through this reflection?
- What areas of growth and renewal do you see still on the horizon?

Consider beginning your reflections on these two experiences by drawing on large sheets of paper. Tell the stories! Be attentive to your emotions and physical sensations such as tightness in your throat, joy, sadness, excitement, and so on.

For our May 2 class session you should have chosen your two experiences, done an initial “sketch” of both stories (either in pictures or writing), and be prepared BRIEFLY to speak about one of them. Also, spend some time over the first six weeks reviewing the two or three pastoral skills, spirituality, and field education courses from your time at STM that have been most influential in shaping your sense of your ministerial identity and be prepared to share one resource (book, idea, project, etc.) from each.

The primary task of the facilitator for the day on May 2 will be to shape the BRIEF sharing of these stories and resources.

C. Public Presentation

On May 9, 16, or 23, each student will make a 20 minute presentation on their ministerial identity, answering the following question:

As a leader in Christian ministry
grounded in the theological standpoint articulated in your first presentation,
how have you been **educated and formed**
to serve, challenge, and heal
churches, communities, and all creation?

D. Suggested Schedule of Class Sessions for Presentations on Ministerial Identity (May 9, 16, and 23)

Welcome and Prayer	10 minutes
First Presentation	
Presentation	20 minutes
Response and Discussion	15 minutes
Transition/Stretch	5 minutes
Second Presentation	
Presentation	20 minutes
Response and Discussion	15 minutes
Break (around 10:30)	15 minutes
Discussion of Reading Assigned by Instructor and/or Issues Raised by Presentations	60 minutes
Closure	5 minutes

Both presentations will be enhanced by your use of creative posters, power point, overheads, music, artifacts, drama, etc. For above all, the presentations offer a time and space to honor your process of formation and “strut your stuff.” If you have any special needs for your presentations, please be in contact with the instructor at least a week ahead of time to make the necessary arrangements for equipment.

Case Study

Develop from your experience a case study that has tested your leadership and ministry, or that of someone you know. Type up the description, context, any pertinent dialogue, a summary of characters, and submit two copies to Mark Taylor (no more than three pages) at the beginning of class on May 9. One copy will be distributed among your peers on May 16 and will be part of their final paper. Mark Taylor will keep the other copy. Please make your case studies as concrete as possible, broad enough for some variety of interpretation, discreet enough to protect peoples' privacy (considering using pseudonyms both for people and institutions), and interesting enough that someone else might also find the case study lively, challenging, and provocative. Please do not use the story that you spoke about on May 2 in our initial discussion of Ministerial Identity as your case study. However, your case study might arise out of the second of two ministerial experiences you reviewed earlier.

Preparation for Leave Taking Session – May 30

A. Journal on each of the following questions:

- 1) How have I changed since I first came to STM? How has life shifted (friends, family, etc.)? How have my physical surroundings changed? At home? At work?
- 2) What places have been significant places or sacred sites for me during my STM journey: places on the Seattle University campus, places in the surrounding area, ministry sites?
- 3) Are there areas of unfinished business with STM faculty, staff, administrators, or other students? Is there something I need to do at this point to deal with this unfinished business, for myself or for another person?
- 4) What are the primary gifts or learnings that have occurred since I first came to STM?
- 5) What would be helpful to me in ritualizing the leave taking (or the coming near to the end) of my program at STM?

B. Be prepared to share with the group:

- 1) Your primary insights from the above journaling.
- 2) Anything you still want/need to have happen to bring your STM experience to closure.
- 3) Any last thing you didn't get to say.
- 4) What do you think will sustain you in ongoing learning as minister?
- 5) A SYMBOL of your ministry and theology at this place and time.

C. The facilitator for this final class session will design prayer and ritual and method for sharing as we take our leave.

Final Synthesis Paper

Your final paper should include five elements:

- 1) A three to five page section once more setting out your theological standpoint, now refined and strengthened by everything you have read, thought, spoken, and heard throughout the course.
- 2) A three to five page section discussing what it means to you to serve, challenge, and heal churches, communities, and all creation.
- 3) A three to five page section that applies your theological standpoint and ministerial identity to the case study distributed to you on May 16.
- 4) An appendix that includes the case study itself.
- 5) A bibliography of all works cited throughout the paper.

This paper is due by 12:00 noon on Tuesday, June 6 in Mark Taylor's office (Hunthausen 210).

School of Theology and Ministry Mission Statement:

With God's help
and in creative partnership
with participating churches in the Pacific Northwest,
The School of Theology and Ministry
educates and forms women and men
as leaders in Christian ministry
to serve, challenge, and heal
churches, communities, and all creation.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Contributions

Presenter

Stay in touch with your feeling level. This is not just reporting – get into the passion of the meaning of the event. Relate the story/material knowing the time will fly by. Engage the group. Use color, large paper, power point, pictures, gestures, story-telling techniques, music – whatever it takes to communicate your truth.

Facilitator

Each class will begin with prayer and a brief check-in led by the facilitator of the day. The same facilitator will also guide the process for the class – including some brief evaluation/closure at the end.

As facilitator, one offers a role of listener and setting the context. Create sacred space, gently remind presenters about timing. This will be an opportunity for you to develop increased awareness, presence, and timing skills. (Timing is key – don't allow more to the first presenter and shortchange the last!)

Listener

As Angeles Arrien says, we need to show up, pay attention, name our truth, and trust the process. As listeners we show up and pay attention. This means deep listening – empathetically. After this many years at S.T.M., this is something we do well and with grace for each other. While people are setting up and taking down, please refrain from chatter and discussion, so that a spirit of presence and attending permeated the room for the presenters. We know that probably the most wanted blessing among today's society is precisely this gift – presence. Our presence is gift to the other; our reverence opens us to receive the gift that is shared.