

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
901 12TH AVENUE, P.O. BOX 222000
SEATTLE, WA 98122-1090

STMA 557 M.DIV. SYNTHESIS
3 CREDITS

SPRING QUARTER 2014
TUESDAYS, 9:00 – 11:50 A.M.
HUNTHAUSEN 100

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SYLLABUS

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to assist students in the integration and articulation of their gifts and limits in relation to their ministry as leaders in the church. It stresses the synthesis of theological study, ministerial experience, and personal and spiritual growth. To be taken during final year of course work. Prerequisite: STMA 546 and 555.

II. STM LEARNING OUTCOMES THIS COURSE ADDRESSES

- 1) Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian tradition.
- 2) Ability to articulate a personal and ecclesial theology of ministry.
- 3) Ability to inform ecclesial leadership with theology.
- 4) Ability to discern and nurture spiritual experience in relation to self and others.
- 5) Ability to articulate one's relationship with God, as it is informed by theological reflection in one's social context.

[Note that four of these five learning outcomes make specific reference to theology!]

III. COURSE GOALS

The distinctive educational model of Seattle University's School of Theology and Ministry guides the work of M.Div. Synthesis. Think of it as a three-legged stool: the integration of theological understanding, ministerial or pastoral skills, and personal and spiritual formation. And this stool, this integrative educational model, rests upon three foundational commitments of STM: to ecumenical collaboration, to multicultural competence, and to a faith that does justice (maybe the rug upon which the stool sits?). Without disregarding the rug or the other two legs, M.Div. Synthesis gives focused and sustained attention to the "theological understanding" leg of the stool.

Guided by this educational model and these commitments, as well as by this focus on theology, each student in M.Div. Synthesis will:

- review significant insights and learnings from all course work and formation activities in the M.Div. program;
- identify the sources of and resources for her/his theology from scripture, tradition, and experience; describe them for, and discuss them with, other members of the class; write a brief reflection paper in light of class feedback;
- review key experiences that have shaped her/his ministerial identity; choose one and write a very brief reflection paper upon it;
- reflect upon and assess the spiritual practices that currently support and nourish her/him as a person and a minister; choose two, describe them for, and discuss them with, other members of the class; write a brief reflection paper in light of class feedback;
- synthesize and present her/his theology of ministry publicly to all interested members of the STM community and discuss it; paying special attention to one's theological standpoint, its center of gravity (or core), shape, and pattern; naming one's ministry; and elaborating one's spiritual practice;
- deepen attitudes and practices of ongoing education and formation that will sustain her/his ministry in the years to come (especially skills of attentive reading, thoughtful and concise writing, reasoned and compassionate discussion and conversation, and spiritual practices of action and contemplation).

IV. 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 forests, pulpits and altars. Plan on allocating several hours a week over the next ten weeks just to the task of synthesizing – reading, re-reading, reflecting, re-creating holistically. The process will vary for each student. In other words, you the students and your entire careers here at STM are the primary required texts for this course!

V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COURSE

Each student is responsible for the following:

- Class attendance, preparation, and participation;
- Facilitation of one class session (individually or in pairs);
- Class workshop on sources of/resources for theology;
- Brief reflection paper on sources of/resources for theology;
- Personal review of ministerial identity;
- Very brief reflection paper on ministerial identity;
- Class workshop on spiritual practice;
- Brief reflection paper on spiritual practice;
- Public synthesis presentation on theology of ministry;
- Oral response to another class member's theology of ministry presentation.
- Grade rationale.

VI. FACULTY MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE COURSE

The faculty member is responsible for the following:

- Course planning and organization;
- Preparation of syllabus;
- Facilitation of first and last class sessions;
- Discern and create student groups for second and third workshops;
- Providing written and oral feedback on student workshops, papers, and synthesis presentation;
- Serving as theological, ministerial, and spiritual resource throughout the course;
- Holding students accountable in their work of theological, ministerial, and spiritual articulation, while encouraging them to play.

VII. GRADING

Class attendance, preparation, and participation	5%
Class session facilitation	5%
Oral response to another student's public presentation	5%
Grade rationale	5%
Workshop and paper on sources of/resources for theology	15%
Personal review of ministerial identity	10%
Workshop and paper on spiritual practice	15%
Public synthesis presentation on theology of ministry	40%

VIII. SEATTLE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES THIS COURSE ADDRESSES

Upon completion of this course, students will more fully:

- 1) Demonstrate mastery of competencies required in their profession or field.
- 2) Demonstrate effective communication in speech and in writing.
- 3) Exhibit professional integrity, ethical leadership, and effective collaboration skills.
- 4) Develop a professional perspective focused on life-long learning that is informed by the knowledge and skills of their graduate education.

IX. SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS

A. GETTING STARTED

APRIL 1 – (THIS WEEK, MANY CHRISTIANS COMMEMORATE: TUESDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF LENT)

Engaging in Some “Godly Play”
Course Organization
Initial Work toward Theological, Ministerial, and Spiritual Integration

B. GATHERING RAW MATERIALS ON THEOLOGY, MINISTRY, AND SPIRITUALITY

APRIL 8 – (DIETRICH BONHOEFFER, PASTOR AND THEOLOGIAN)

Student Workshops on Sources of/Resources for Theology (x4)
Work on personal review of ministerial identity

APRIL 15 – (TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK; JEWS CELEBRATE PASSOVER)

Student Workshops on Sources of/Resources for Theology (x4)
Work on personal review of ministerial identity

APRIL 22 – (TUESDAY IN EASTER WEEK)

Student Workshops on Sources of/Resources for Theology (x4)
Work on personal review of ministerial identity

APRIL 29 – (ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST – TRANSFERRED; JEWS CELEBRATE YOM HA'SHOAH)

Student Workshops on Spiritual Practice (x12; in three groups)
Work on personal review of ministerial identity

C. ARTICULATING AND EXPLORING A THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

MAY 6 – (DAME JULIAN OF NORWICH)

Public Synthesis Presentations (x3), Responses, and Discussion

MAY 13 – (TUESDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK OF EASTER)

Public Synthesis Presentations (x3), Responses, and Discussion

MAY 20 – (TUESDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK OF EASTER)

Public Synthesis Presentations (x3), Responses, and Discussion

MAY 27 – (ASCENSION DAY)

Public Presentations (x3), Responses, and Discussion

D. LEAVE TAKING

**JUNE 3 – (LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY OF PENTECOST;
JEW'S CELEBRATE SHAVUOT)**

Concluding Conversation and Sending Prayer

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

A. Classroom Presence

As with other STM supervision and practicum courses, your presence is essential 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 should be negotiated with the group in advance. Please alert someone if you are ill or an emergency arises. Mark Taylor's contact information is on the first page of this syllabus.

It has been said that 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, empathetic listening. After years at STM, 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 permeates the room for the presenters. Perhaps the most highly desired blessing in today's society is precisely the gift of presence. Our presence is gift to the other; our reverence opens us to receive the gifts they share.

B. Class Session Facilitation

Each student is responsible for facilitating one session of the course (either individually or in pairs). Class sessions should begin with a brief prayer and check-in (April 8, 15, 22, 29) or prayer and welcome (May 6, 13, 20, 27) led by the student facilitator(s) of the day. Please allow the prayer to express your own distinctive spiritual practice, as well as that of your ecclesial community, if appropriate. The student facilitator(s) will guide the process for their class session (including timing of activities and breaks). Allow five or ten minutes at the end to provide some act of closure/blessing. The facilitator is (facilitators are) also responsible for arranging the classroom to provide a sense of sacred space. Be sure to remind presenters gently about time limits. (Time is key – don't allow more to the first presenter and shortchange the last!).

C. What Is Theology? (one last time)

As all of you have heard in other classes you have taken from me here at STM, I believe that there is considerable consensus in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries about what, in the broadest sense, theology is and does (as well as lots of divergence on the details!). Most basically, I understand theology to host a dialogue between "Tradition" and "Situation," between the wisdom of a religious heritage we receive from our ancestors and our own experience of the divine in our contemporary context. "Tradition" refers both to scripture and to tradition in the narrower sense of: doctrinal teachings, stories of the saints, church history, patterns of worship, hymns, visual expressions of faith, etc., etc. Experience, or "Situation," includes my own personal life-story, as well as the symbols, assumptions, values, sciences, artifacts, and philosophies of the communities and social groups around me. The ultimate goal of this dialogue

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

between scripture/tradition and experience is new meaning and truth for living, above all enacting the gospel call for a more just and humane world.

D. Workshops (and Personal Review)

1. Workshop One – Sources of and Resources for Theology.

This workshop will be made before the members of the STMA 557 class. It will gather raw materials which will be incorporated into your later synthesis presentation in this course, the one in which you articulate and explore your theology of ministry.

Review, Preparation, and Integration.

As you culminate your studies, identify the five to seven most important sources of and resources for your theology from scripture, tradition, and experience (please include at least one from each category).

- Scripture. Ask yourself which strands of the biblical tradition, which canonical books, which stories or cycles of stories from the Hebrew Testament or the Acts of the Apostles, which of the four gospels, which elements of/stories about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, etc., etc., do you most often find yourself quoting, referring to, returning to, being inspired by?
- Tradition. Similarly, which figures from the history of the church, which creedal expressions or doctrinal statements, which liturgical practices, which hymns, which prayers or prayer practices, which elements of community life and polity, which artifacts (paintings, church buildings, musical compositions), etc., etc., inform your theology most profoundly?
- Experience. Finally, which experiences, either in the last few years since you've been at STM (maybe in an internship, or a worship service, or while preaching, leading prayer, gathering a community, serving others, ministering to the sick, the needy, the dying,...), or previously in your life, have mostly profoundly deconstructed and reconstructed your theology?
- As you reflect upon the sources of/resources for your theology, spend some time revisiting the scripture, historical theology, systematic theology, worship, and ethics courses from your time at STM that have been most influential in shaping your theology and be prepared to share some resources from these courses (a book, an idea, a project, etc.).

[See section G. below for guidelines on the reflection paper that comes out of this workshop.]

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

2. Personal Review of Ministerial Identity.

This workshop will be carried out by each student individually. It will gather raw materials which will be incorporated into your later synthesis presentation in this course, the one in which you articulate and explore your theology of ministry.

Review, Preparation, and Integration.

Choose two significant experiences, events, or relationships that have shaped your ministerial identity. Describe both:

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

From the results of these two experiences, look at yourself as a 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 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 on the horizon?
- As you reflect on these experiences, spend some time reviewing the pastoral skills and field education courses from your time at STM that have been most influential in shaping your ministerial identity. What are the theological reasons why you do the ministry you do? Or, how does your ministry grow out of the theological insights and convictions you hold? Or, how does your theology undergird your ministry? What spiritual disciplines and practices are you led to by your ministry and/or what spirituality keeps your ministry grounded and vital?

[See section G. below for guidelines on the reflection paper that comes out of this personal review.]

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

3. Workshop Two – Spiritual Practice.

This workshop will be made before the members of the STMA 557 class. It will gather raw materials which will be incorporated into your later synthesis presentation in this course, the one in which you articulate and explore your theology of ministry.

Review, Preparation, and Integration.

Choose three or four spiritual practices in which you currently engage (in the broadest possible sense of both words: spiritual and practice: prayer, worship, meditation, physical activities like yoga or hiking or playing a sport if these really are spiritual for you, artistic expression, and so on). Describe them. Why are they important to you? How do they give you spiritual life? Are they forms of play? Does, how does, spiritual play interact with your ministerial work? How does your spiritual practice lead into and out from your theological standpoint? Does, how does, your relationship with God through these spiritual practices keep your theology grounded and vital? As you reflect on these practices, spend some time reviewing the spirituality and worship courses from your time at STM that have been most influential in shaping you.

For your second workshop, present two of these practices and their spiritual significance for you.

[See section G. below for guidelines on the reflection paper that comes out of this workshop.]

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

4. Workshop Procedures.

Each student will have 20 minutes to present on April 8 or 15 or 22, and April 29. Primary goals should be clarity, persuasiveness, and winsomeness. Don't think of this as a formal presentation of the type you made in TPL 2 and will make later in M.Div. Synthesis. It's a workshop; a conversation about a work in progress. Use whatever materials it takes to communicate your truth, but these are perhaps NOT the time to create elaborate PowerPoints (especially workshops two and three).

Suggested Schedule of Class Sessions for Workshops (April 8, 15, 22, and 29)

Prayer and Check-In	5 minutes
First Student in Each Group	
Presentation	20 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Transition/Stretch	5 minutes
Second Student in Each Group	
Presentation	20 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Third Student in Each Group	
Presentation	20 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Transition/Stretch	5 minutes
Fourth Student in Each Group	
Presentation	20 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Closure and Blessing	5 minutes

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

E. Synthesis Presentation – Articulating and Exploring One’s Theology of Ministry

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

2. Review, Preparation, and Integration.

Considering the sources of and resources for your theology identified in your first workshop, take the next step and articulate how these sources/resources come together to form your own theological standpoint. Two students could identify similar theological sources/resources and yet put them together very differently! Theological standpoint should occupy roughly 70% of your time and energy in this presentation.

Explore your standpoint’s center of gravity (or core):

What’s at the heart of things for you theologically?

its shape:

To what other insights and convictions does this core extend? How would you describe the overall contours of your theological standpoint?

and its pattern:

How are the various components of your theological standpoint related and connected to each other? What does the fabric of the tapestry look like?

- As you articulate and explore your theological standpoint, be aware of central images, topics, and themes: God, Jesus Christ, the Spirit; the cosmos, the church, creation, sin, grace, human creaturehood, freedom, sacraments, last things, etc.
- Refer to key theologians and texts, quoting them strategically, as you develop your reflections. Is the theology out of which you minister 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? Migliore’s? Cone’s? And so on and so on...

STM is committed to theological reflection throughout the coursework that constitutes the M.Div. degree. As you articulate the sources of/resources for your theology as a coherent, creative standpoint, revisit the method of theological reflection you find most helpful. (You have MTI and 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 of theological reflection consists of attention to at least three elements: tradition (including scripture), experience (or situation), and action. Each method defines these a little differently, each calls for different skills, but each relies on

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

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 theological reflection moves: **tradition (including scripture) – situation (or experience)** and **action/practice – contemplation/renewal**.

Considering the ministerial identity developed in your personal review, take the next step and name your ministry briefly in relationship to your theological standpoint (see above). What are the theological reasons why you do the ministry you do? Or, how does your ministry grow out of the theological insights and convictions you hold? Or, how does your theology undergird your ministry? Ministry should occupy roughly 10% of your time and energy in this presentation.

Considering the content of your second workshop, take the next step and describe the spiritual practices (prayer, worship, meditation, physical activities like yoga or hiking or playing a sport, artistic expression, and so on) you believe will support and nourish you in the ministry you name (see above). Spirituality should occupy roughly 20% of your time and energy in this presentation.

Please note that although theology should get 70% of your attention, ministry 10%, and spirituality 20%, you are free to organize your presentation any way you find most effective. You do NOT have to go through theology, ministry, spirituality in a 1, 2, 3 order. You could begin your presentation by describing a spiritual practice and lead to theology and ministry; or, begin with the naming of ministry and proceed through theology to spirituality, etc.

3. Public Presentation

On May 6, 13, 20, or 27, each student will make a 25 minute presentation answering the following questions:

What is your theological standpoint? What is its center of gravity (or core), shape, and pattern?

Name the ministry for which this theology provides the foundation?

How does your spirituality support your ministry and interweave with your theology?

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

4. Suggested Schedule of Class Sessions for Presentations on Theology of Ministry (May 6, 13, 20, and 27)

Welcome and Prayer	5 minutes
First Presentation	
Presentation	25 minutes
Response and Discussion	20 minutes
Transition/Break	10 minutes
Second Presentation	
Presentation	25 minutes
Response and Discussion	20 minutes
Transition/Break	10 minutes
Third Presentation	
Presentation	25 minutes
Response and Discussion	20 minutes
Closure and Blessing	..5 minutes

As you present, stay in touch with your feeling level. This is not just reporting – get into the passion of the meaning of the event. Relate the material knowing the time will fly by. Engage the group. This presentation may 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 education and formation; feel empowered to “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.

5. Oral Response. The respondent will initiate the discussion of another student’s presentation (5 minutes maximum). Keep in mind that the respondent will have the first word, not the last word – your work in the response is to open up discussion, not close it down. Consider these guidelines as you respond to one another in this formal way:

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

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

F. Preparation for Leave Taking Session – June 3

Journal or doodle on 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, meeting places of faith communities, 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?
- 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?

Be prepared to share with the group:

- 1) Your primary insights from the above journaling/doodling.
- 2) Anything you still want/need to have happen to bring your STM experience to closure.
- 3) Any last thing you haven't gotten to say before.
- 4) What do you think will sustain you in ongoing learning and formation as minister and a person of faith?
- 5) A SYMBOL of your theology, ministry, and spirituality.

G. Reflection Papers

Reflection Paper #1. Each student will write a 1000 word (3 page) paper in response to the following question. As you reflect upon the results of your workshop on sources of/resources for theology (including class discussion and feedback), how is this sketch of your theology different after having been at STM than it would have been 5, 10, 15, 20 years ago (you choose the appropriate time frame). This paper is due no later than April 15 for those who led their first workshop on April 8; no later than April 22 for those who led their first workshop on April 15 and no later than April 29 for workshop leaders on April 22.

Reflection Paper #2. Each student will write a 300 word (1 page) paper reflecting upon the single strongest connection between her/his ministerial identity and the sources of/resources for her/his theology, as well as the single most obvious lack of connection. Consider material developed in your personal review. This paper is due no later than May 6.

X. PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS (CONTINUED)

Reflection Paper #3. Each student will write a 1000 word (3 page) paper on the strengths and weaknesses of one's spiritual practices, as well as the possible need for alternative or additional practices in the future. Consider these two questions as ways of making it real. What is the most energy-draining and "death"-inducing attitude or behavior or tendency within you that might hold you back from ministry? What form of spiritual play helps (or might help in the future) overcome the draining of energy and in the inducing of "death." Consider class discussion and peer feedback from your second workshop, as well as all of your life experience over the course of the quarter. This paper is due on June 3.

H. Each student will provide a **grade rationale** that states your understanding of what grade you believe you have earned this quarter. Please address the objectives of the course, as well as your fulfillment of the requirements. This rationale is due on June 3.