

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course serves as both an introduction for newer students and a synthesis for completing students. Through presentation and small group process that joins more advanced students with those just beginning their studies, participants will explore feelings, images and insights from particular experiences, then connect these with the resources of Christian tradition. This model of correlation will be explored as the axis for theological reflection and for theological method itself.

Using this model, students will explore the correlation of their gifts for and experience in service with the variety of Church traditions about charism and office in ministry. This reflection process will work toward different images of oneself as minister. On the tradition side, theological understandings of the trinity and the role of the Spirit will ground this inquiry.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES :**

- To articulate and practice the authentically human movement to insight.
- To claim the received wisdom of tradition/Tradition.
- To study the historical correlations of tradition and experience.
- To correlate one's own tradition with one's particular experiences.
- To explore Christian doctrines with implications for ministry.
- To develop a working image of oneself in ministry.

**MAPS LEARNING OUTCOMES** highlighted in this course:

- ✓ Ability to reflect theologically on the central themes of the Christian Tradition.
- ✓ Ability to articulate and live from an understanding of self as human, minister, and leader.
- ✓ Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can enter another's worldview.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Attendance, even better presence, especially to one another.
- Evidence of familiarity with the assigned reading.
- Participation – both in small group and large group discussion.
- Assignment between weekends – see description below.
- Synthesis paper – see description below.

**TEXTBOOKS: to be read before the first weekend.**

**Parker Palmer.** *Let Your Life Speak*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. Subtitled "Listening for the Voice of Vocation" this short text introduces the reader to that "inner teacher" who knows how to find meaning and purpose for the journey. Keep track of feelings, images and insights that resonate with your experience.

**Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer.** *The Art of Theological Reflection*. New York: Crossroad, 1994. A primer on the human "movement to insight" (echoes of Bernard Lonergan) with the related structure for doing theological reflection. The first 75 pages are basic

material for the first weekend, but finish the book if you can. Writing up an actual theological reflection according to their instructions will be between-weekends homework.

#### ASSIGNMENT DUE AT FIRST CLASS

Write a 500-word essay on Parker Palmer's book answering the question: What was challenging or relevant to you as a person pursuing ministry?

#### First Weekend Sessions

1. Entering Experience
2. Image - Insight - Action
3. Tradition and Experience
4. Doing Correlation

#### ASSIGNMENTS BETWEEN WEEKENDS

1. Use the model from Chapter 4 in Killen and de Beer – "Beginning with personal positions" [pp.104-106]. Write up a 3-4 page, double-spaced paper with your results to be **handed in on Friday evening** of the second weekend. The paper is not a formal essay, but do follow grammar and syntax rules for readability and clarity.

Start with statements as suggested, but instead of "church" as the focal topic, let your statements be about "ministry." So, for instance, the 3 "convictions for which you are willing to argue" will be your convictions about ministry. Follow the steps and write up both your process (e.g. the initial list of 10 convictions) and also your results. Use common sense here – the reader doesn't need to know everything, but enough detail to see how you followed the process and came to some result.

2. Book review assignment: Write a 500 word review of 3-4 chapters you read in Susan Wood's book or Wallace Alston and Cynthia Jarvis' book highlighting theological foundations of ministry or the importance of theological foundations.

Please submit a self-addressed, stamped, envelope with your assignment so that it can be returned to you after the weekend.

#### TEXTBOOKS to be read before the second weekend.

**L. William Countryman.** *Living on the Border of the Holy*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1999. The subtitle, "Renewing the Priesthood of All," announces the author's effort to reduce clergy vs. lay tensions in ministry by rooting all in the fundamental priestly nature of human life.

*Required Option:* [The Susan Wood edited essays reflect more on theological foundations for ministry especially in more liturgical/sacramental settings. The Alston and Jarvis edited essays reflect more on the necessity of theological foundations for any successful ministry. Choose one text to report on according to your situation.]

**Susan K. Wood, ed.** *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: theologies of lay and ordained ministry*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003. This collection of essays by Roman Catholic authors reports a symposium studying the increasing presence of lay ministry in the church against the background of what had been largely a clerical, ordained ministry. The authors explore a new structure rooted in baptism and

work out implications. Find and read the essays most central to your own experience of questions about ministry.

**W. Alston & C. Jarvis, eds.** *The Power to Comprehend with all the Saints: the Formation and Practice of a Pastor-Theologian*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. This book of essays by mainly Presbyterian pastors argues that the church lives when the pastor is first and foremost a theologian. There are 12 essays addressing the formation of the pastor-theologian and 12 essays on the practice of the pastor-theologian.

Optional:

**Miroslav Volf.** *Exclusion and Embrace*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996. This book is a rich resource of material from a more evangelical theological tradition around foundational issues of ministry such as identity, otherness and reconciliation. Volf's insight will challenge and develop your own beginning work from the first weekend.

### Second Weekend Sessions

1. Images of Ministry
2. Trinity and Ministry
3. Communion in the Holy Spirit
4. Ministry through the Ages
5. Jesus and Ministry

### FINAL SYNTHESIS PAPER – guidelines, pointers, suggestions

Within the limits of 8 or 9 double-spaced, typed pages, the student needs to present a personal synthesis of learning from this course. Here the format requirements for Written Assignments should be followed carefully. This synthesis could be developed in various ways.

- A. Determine and describe how your own ministerial situation finds grounding, direction, and challenge in the theological foundations for ministry explored in this course.
- B. Present an initial summary of your personal theology of ministry, particularly any defining image or metaphor, referring to elements of this course as appropriate.

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Within either of these suggested frameworks, the personal tone and evidence of synthesis should shine through. The integration need not produce polished conclusions; critical questions expressed clearly are often a better index of new learning.

The synthesis paper is **due Friday, March 11, 2011**, at the latest. Earlier results would be appreciated. For return mail, please enclose a stamped envelope. Otherwise, papers will be returned via the holding files in the STM Office.

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

- Attendance: Punctuality shows genuine care about the schedules of other people. There could be an excuse for missing a session, though missing a class may affect the final grade. Advance notice is welcome. The student has the responsibility for getting information about what went on in the session missed.
- Participation: More than attentiveness, participation means interacting with instructors and other students whether in larger or smaller groupings. Participation will show a familiarity with assigned readings for the session.
- Work between weekends: The theological reflection on convictions about ministry needs to show personal engagement with the process. This will become clear in the articulation of the outcomes – perhaps not neat answers, but important insights for the journey.

The book review will show a capacity for understanding the viewpoint of others by a clear articulation, in summary form, of leading insights of the authors about the foundation, demands, and meaning of ministry.

- Final synthesis paper: Here the capacity of the student for understanding and insight will shine forth in the critical articulation and correlation of course materials to personal ministerial situations.
- Determining a grade: Successful completion of the four factors outlined above would yield a **B** grade. A superior achievement in one or more of these areas will notch the grade upward. An outstanding achievement across the board will reach an **A**.
- Grading weight: The written work, particularly the final synthesis, will carry the most weight in determining the final grade. A strong class performance should match the written work and will often change final outcomes by a plus or minus.

Thank you in advance for your good work and energy.