STMA 557 M.DIV. SYNTHESIS

Spring 2008
Fridays 9:00 to 11:50
Michael B. Raschko
mraschko@seattleu.edu
206-296-5311
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course assists students in the integration and articulation of their theological, pastoral and spiritual development in their course of studies for the M.Div. It gives them 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 in their degree work. It asks them 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.

Goals and Objectives

1. Students will review significant insights from their course work in the M.Div. program.
2. Students will review the central tenets and theological stance of their denomination.
3. Students will articulate both of the above in a class presentation and engage in a critical discussion of the material they present.
4. Students will articulate the pastoral implications of #s 1 and 2 above.
5. Students will apply the results of their reflection and discussion in #s 1-4 to a critical pastoral situation.
6. Students will articulate this synthesis in a presentation open to the public and in a final synthesis paper.

Texts

There are no specific texts students must read for this course. The texts for the course are your papers, texts from the many courses you took during you M.Div. studies, other significant works you have read or would like to read during this course, significant experiences you may have had that opened insights for you.

Student Work for the Course

There are six oral and written assignments students must do for the work of this course.

1. An oral presentation and discussion of what the student thinks are the three to five central tenets of his or her denomination and how these shape the student's sense of himself or herself as a minister. This presentation should be the result of the following:
    a. their reading key documents of their denomination,
    b. their study of the history of their denomination,
    c. the liturgical practice of their denomination
    d. and the moral teachings of their denomination.

Thought should be given to how these three to five tenets or factors relate to one another.
The student should also reflect on how their sense of ministry as representative of their denomination has been stretched by their growing ecumenical awareness of the ecclesiology and ministerial practice of other denominations.
The student should share some examples of how these tenets have shaped their practice in actual ministerial situations.

2. A four to five page paper on the same topic as #1, written in the light of their reflection, reading, presentation, and the discussion of their presentation. This paper is due the week after they make the presentation to the class.
3. An oral presentation and discussion of the five to six central tenets of the student's theological stance. The presentation should answer the question of where the student stands theologically as a minister. (Perhaps they should be the student's version of Martin Luther's "Here I stand. I can do no other.") This presentation should be the result of the student's review of the materials from their courses in the M.Div. program. These central tenets can be scriptural, theological, moral, or liturgical, but at least a couple of them should be from the scriptures. The student may want to pay some attention to how they interpret the scriptures. The student should pay special attention to how these tenets are integrated with one another and how they have and will shape the student's pastoral practice.
4. A four to five page paper on the same topic as #3, written in the light of their reflection, reading, presentation, and the discussion of their presentation. This paper is due the week after they make the presentation to the class.
5. A presentation in a class open to the public in which the student synthesizes the work done in #s 1-4 above. The presentation should include the following:
    a. How the student sees himself or herself as a minister within the tradition of their denomination.
    b. How the student understands their ministry in the light of their own theological stance.
    c. The pastoral implications of a and b.
6. A final synthesis paper based on #5 above.

Besides these six assignments students are also expected

- To spend 5 to 6 hours a week combing through texts and papers from their course work, reflecting on what they have learned, and seeking to synthesize their learning in a theological and pastoral vision of ministry.
- To actively listen and respond to the work of the other students in class.
- Be the lead respondent three times to a presentation by another student. This should take no longer than 4 minutes. You should point out what you think are the strong points in the students presented material and ask two or three questions which would enable the presenting student to further develop their thought.

Expectations for Written Work

- All papers are to be handed in to the professor by the time of class the following week.
- Provide footnotes and a bibliography.
- Papers must strictly adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Papers must be typed, double-spaced, on standard 8 1/2"x 11" paper. Use 1 inch margins all round. Use 12 pt. type. Do not use right-hand justification as it leads to oddly spaced words. **Staple the paper in the top left-hand corner**. Do not use plastic covers or binders. Keep a copy other than the one you submit.

Grading

Class participation = 20%
Presentation and Paper #1 = 20%
Presentation and Paper #2 = 20%
Public Presentation and Final synthesis = 40%

Class Schedule

Class 1: getting organized

There will be a two week period between classes 1 and 2 because we do not meet on Good Friday. That should give the first presenters a little more time to get ready.

Denominational Presentations:

We have 25 minutes for each of these:

12 minute presentation
3 minute response
10 minutes of discussion

Class 2: six denominational presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Class 3: six denominational presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Theological Presentations

We have 25 minutes for each of these:

12 minute presentation
3 minute response
10 minutes of discussion

Class 4: six theological presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Class 5: six theological presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Public Presentations

We will take 50 minutes for each of these:

25 minutes for the presentation
5 for the response
20 minutes for discussion with all those present

Class 6: Three public synthesis presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Class 7: Three public synthesis presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Class 8: Three public synthesis presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

Class 9: Three public synthesis presentations and discussions

_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____
_____ respondent: _____

For those responding: What does criticism mean

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

Please note there will be no class on Friday, May 30. I must be at a theological conference in Pittsburg.