

COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
2121 Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60201

YEAR FIVE

COS 514 THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF MINISTRY

This course emphasizes the integration of the role of the practicing pastor with the church's theological heritage and its particular Wesleyan expression. The course also stresses theology as an ongoing task of critical reflection for the purpose of action. Consideration is given to issues, events, and institutions that form the context within which the pastor is required to think, speak, and act with theological clarity.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Continued growth of the pastor's identity as a theologian and the development of his or her own credo (a written statement of the pastor's own understanding of Christian doctrine);
- Focus upon thinking theologically about everyday activities and contemporary events in the political, economic, and social areas of life;
- Reflection upon a variety of theological perspectives in order to apply a faithful critique to persons who claim to be God's voices in our time;
- Integration of the pastor's theological understanding in the practice and evaluation of ministry;
- Encouragement of lifelong theological reading, reflection and growth.

A. COURSE TEXTBOOKS

1. Required Texts:

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2004 (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 2004)

Jones, Scott, United Methodist Doctrine: The Extreme Center (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002). ISBN 0-687-03485-X

Lovett Weems, Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit. ISBN 0687046920.

Frederick Buechner, The Sacred Journey: A Memoir of Early Days. ISBN 0060611839.

2. Supplementary Texts

Donald English, An Evangelical Theology of Preaching (Abingdon, 1996). ISBN 0687121787

Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (eds.), Practicing Theology Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life (William B. Eerdmans, 2002). ISBN 0802849318.

B. CLASS RULES

1. Each student is expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct as stipulated in the Seminary publications.
2. Class Attendance is checked at all times. Students who fail to complete 18 hours of in class instruction will not receive credit for the course.
3. Class Participation. Students are expected to be wholly (physically, emotionally, socially, etc.) present and to fully participate in all class activities. And since this is an intensive study, students are expected to be fully prepared with their class summary, presentations, questions, critics, etc. on assigned book readings.
4. Cell Phones/Beepers are to be turned off all the time while in class as a gesture of respect for others.
5. Freedom and responsibility. Individual rights and freedom must not violate anyone's rights and freedom. Freedom is not a license to do anything you want. Freedom always goes with responsibility. Each student is expected to be respectful, tolerant, considerate, understanding, compassionate, using decent language in communications, and treating everyone as a person with dignity and honor

C. Instructions: how to format your homework

1. Read the pages, take notes and answer the questions completely in your own words, using complete sentences (unless otherwise noted). Do not quote extensively from the texts you read. Digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words.
2. Follow approximate length given for each item of written work.
3. Print your written work on 8½ X 11 white paper, one side only, double-spaced, with a one-inch margins all around. On computer use a 12-point font, either Times New Roman or Arial. One page equals approximately 250 words. If typewriter is your only option, use 10 pitch (pica), or 12 pitch (elite). Do not use script, condensed, or all caps print.
4. On each page of your work, include a header with your name, the class number, and the page number. Begin each numbered item on a new sheet of paper, writing that number at the beginning of your answer. Do not type the questions before your answers.
5. If you quote from a printed text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including pages) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long. Ideas and information should be stated in your own words, not in the words of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. For example, if the source is Harper's Bible Dictionary, then use (HBD, p. 34-35). If you refer to books that are not listed on the class

reading list, then you must give full bibliographic information. The Proper Citations page will give you more information about how to present bibliographic information in your work.

6. Staple all pages for each of course of each module together in a sequential manner, using one staple in the upper left-hand corner. Do not staple together papers for more than one course. Do not bind your homework or turn in 3-ring binders or plastic/paper report covers.
7. Add a title page to each course of each module that includes a) the name of the course, b) your name, and c) the date of the first day of class.
8. The due date for written work is listed on the homework main page. Late work is only accepted with prior approval of the Director of the Course of Study School.
9. Make a copy of your material and bring it with you for your own use during the school.

NOTE: Using other people's materials without documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such activity, otherwise known as plagiarism usually means failure for the course with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Professors will report all instances of plagiarism to the Director of the Course of Study. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the professor and the student, and the student will be given opportunity to explain the situation. The Director in consultation with the professor will make a decision about what action is appropriate for a first instance of plagiarism. Such action could include, rewriting the material, or failure of the course. A brief summary of the meeting will be prepared by the Director and placed in the student's file in the Course of Study Office and kept there until the student completes the Course of Study Curriculum. If a second instance of plagiarism is documented, the student will fail the course and the Director will determine what other consequences may apply.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE that the first two papers (My Life and My Faith) are to be submitted by the deadline for submission of homework so that the instructor can evaluate them and give a proper feedback to students while in session. The movie/current event reflection paper is to be done while the class is in session to further sharpen the students' skills of doing theological reflection on current social issues. The final paper, "Ministry Integration Paper", is the final paper requirement of the class. It is expected that students will be able to demonstrate further their ability to incorporate and integrate their knowledge of the Bible, Church Tradition, show a coherent use of Reason and the application of the findings of natural and social sciences, and must be relevant or validated by day to day experiences. It is also expected that appropriate insights and principles that the students learned in class will find their way into this final paper.

D. SUGGESTED ORDER OF CLASS BOOK READINGS

1. LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN

It is suggested that students begin by reading the book, "The Sacred Journey: A Memoir of Early Days" by Frederick Buechner. Take note most especially how the author presented a

creative synthesis of a memoir and theological faith journey. The book might be helpful in looking at your life story from the perspective of faith and theology and on how you can weave them together to become one story.

2. DRAWING FROM COMMON WELLS

Reading the book “Practicing Theology Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life” might remind students that their main calling is to make their faith come alive in their thoughts, life and action and such calling is being shared with all other Christians, clergy and lay. This book may be helpful in making your life and ministry a work of theology and how you influence your parishioners to become theologians in their own way.

3. REVISITING OUR EVANGELICAL ROOTS

Reading the book “An Evangelical Theology of Preaching” will familiarize the students of the particular brand of Christianity that United Methodism claims to belong. Please take note of the differences or similarities (if any) between the brand of evangelicalism that the UMC claims as its roots and the kind of evangelicalism that is associated with the Christian right today.

4. FOCUSING ON OUR UMC’S WAY OF DOING THEOLOGY

- Scott Jones in his book “United Methodist Doctrine The Extreme Center” helps students to know the nature, the scope, the practice and the goal of UMC’s doctrines. What do you think is the role of doctrine in the overall life and mission of the church today?
- Leadership is a handmaiden of the practice of theology. Lovett H. Weems, Jr., leads the students in discovering the distinctly United Methodist way of leading and guiding through his insightful discussion of the principles, practices and passions of leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit.

5. THE CHALLENGE: IT’S NOW OUR TURN to practice and live out theology in your respective churches and communities.

E. ASSIGNMENTS

1. “My Life” Theological Reflection Paper.

This essay should contain your spiritual journey. Since this is a theological paper, it should highlight the turning points, the factors, events and circumstances that contributed to the formation of your faith and spiritual life. Basic information such as ethnicity, gender, place of birth, educational level, economic status, religious beliefs, occupation, career goals, marital status, family information, childhood background may be incorporated into the paper. However, you should show their connection into the building up of your faith. No less than a third of the paper may be used to discuss your own personal analysis and conclusions about your life from the perspective of theology. This paper should be 8-10 pages (excluding bibliography) and is due in the COS office on or before the homework deadline.

2. “My Faith” Theological Reflection Paper.

This paper should explain briefly but adequately your basic beliefs on the basic theological themes such as church, salvation, grace, realm of God, eternal life, etc. Citations from the Bible, from tradition, from theology (doctrines) and from real experiences are always helpful to show how you have come to your present personal Christian beliefs. This paper should be 8-10 pages (excluding sources) and will be due in the COS office on or before the homework deadline.

3. **Movie/Current Events Theological Reflection Papers.**

To sharpen a student's ability to think and reflect biblically and theologically, a couple of reflection papers (2-3 pages in length) may be required on movies of contemporary social issues or daily current events while the class is going on. This paper may be shared in class discussion, small groups and/or in daily class devotions.

4. **"My Ministry Integration Paper" (MIP).**

This paper may be a theological reflection or a preaching material on two social issues that you will deal with during or after our class have met. Social issues may include abortion, war and peace, human sexuality, same sex marriage/holy union, capitalism, poverty, sexism, racism, biomedical technology, etc. It must show the student's ability to integrate his knowledge on the Bible, church tradition/doctrine, appropriate and relevant findings of social and natural sciences (reason) and must be validated by or applicable to real life experiences. This paper should be 10-12 pages (excluding sources) and must be submitted to the COS office on or before August 31.

5. **Class Journal**

Each student is expected to have a journal for the assigned readings – required textbooks and at least portions of supplementary texts. A journal is more than a notebook. It may include a brief summary of the readings, but more importantly it must include feelings, thoughts, insights on the readings as well as questions, critique or reflection. Journals on the readings must be submitted to the instructor on the first day of classes.

F. CLASS METHODOLOGY

The problem-posing pedagogy in education popularized by Paulo Freire will be applied as the main teaching-learning method in this class. Small group discussion, panel discussion, debate, dramatization, role play, movies, media/news clips, games, etc., will be employed to meet as many learning styles that may be represented in the class. The following are some movies on some burning contemporary social issues. Students might want to watch for the first time or review them if they have seen them before. Clips or portions of these movies may be shown from time to time in class whenever it is appropriate to further enrich the learning process:

- Romero
- If These Walls Could Talk
- Crash
- Freedomland
- North Country
- Hotel Rwanda
- Brokeback Mountain
- The Mission

- Others

G. EVALUATION AND GRADING SYSTEM

Student's evaluation takes into account attendance, class participation, examinations and other requirements that may be asked by the instructor:

Class Attendance and Participation	=	15 percent
Reflection Papers	=	15 percent
Class Journal	=	10 percent
"My Life" Paper	=	20 percent
"My Faith" Paper	=	20 percent
"My Ministry" Paper	=	20 percent

Grading standard is as follows –

A - 90-100 % - For consistently superior performance in class discussion, individual or group reporting, outstanding paper works, and exhibiting solid character and personal ethic shown but not limited to his/her respectful relationships with classmates and the instructor, as well as the student's overall display of maturity and responsibility.

B - 80 – 89 % - For an overall class performance (class participation, paper works, written exams, relationships, responsibility) significantly surpassing the requirements of the class.

C - 70 – 79 % -For an overall academic performance that meets the basic course standards.

F - 0 – 69 % - For an overall academic performance that merits no credit.

H. HOMEWORK DUE DATE: please refer to the English Homework page.