

# Syllabus

H 323 Congregational Care

Summer 2019

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**Objective:** To provide students with knowledge and understanding of the variety of experiences in the field of congregational care so that individual effectiveness so that the people whom are under their care for will experience the most positive way in his or her ministry.

**Goals -** Students will be able to:

- Implement and oversee appropriate types of care in varieties of settings including prisons, hospitals, nursing facilities, and homes.
- Organize caring ministries within the congregation.
- Discern and implement appropriate boundaries, knowing when and to whom to refer people, and when and when not to share information.
- Reflect on the practice skills of sensitive caregiving, using role play and analysis case studies.
- Comprehend and use the gifts each student brings to congregational care.
- Include in meaningful ways the context within which they offer care.
- Develop skills of listening, pastoral presence, and empowerment of others that are shaped by the cultural and local context and by the Gospel.
- Implement appropriate boundaries and develop further awareness of self-care.

**Overview:** The progress of the course will begin as a student learns more about himself/herself and his/her personal and theological approach to life, faith, and the work of ministry. Then they will attend to the larger context of family, congregation, and community. Following that there will be a series of opportunities to look further at specifics of congregational care including the many venues and circumstances a pastor can expect to confront.

Author and title	Publication information	Annotation by RPP
<b>Required Readings</b>		
Schieb, Karen. <i>Pastoral Care: Telling the Stories of our Lives.</i>	Nashville: Abington, 2016.	A different approach to listening and to care by an excellent and experienced teacher and pastor.
Hoefl, Jeanne; Jung, L. Shan- non and Marshall, Joretta. <i>Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities.</i>	Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.	One of the best researched and documented examinations of rural or small communities and their churches. Excellent in- sights and understanding. GBHEM recommended.
Webb, Larry E. <i>Crisis Counseling in the Congregation</i>	Nashville: Abington Press, 2011.	An overview of congregational care from the perspective of dealing with crises in individual and community lives. GBHEM required.
<b>Supplemental Readings</b>		
Doehring, Carrie. <i>The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Post-modern Approach.</i>	Westminster John Knox, 2006	Required reading for “Intro to Pastoral Care” offered to M.Div. students at GETS.
Dykstra, Robert C. <i>Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings.</i>	St Louis: Chal- ice Press, 2005.	A wide overview of pastoral theology/pastoral care with special attention to images from clown to storyteller or reti- cent outlaw.
Killen, Jr., James L. <i>Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church.</i>	Nashville: Abington Press, 2005.	One person’s very specific recommendations. Usually very good, plain advice. A quick read.

“Self-Care”

Ministry is not a solo “performance.” It involves a pastoral presence that is supported by many people. A solo operator is almost certainly subject to burnout or, worse, misconduct or boundary crossing. But each pastor does things differently in terms of a support system. The numbers of people, the intensity and depth of relationship, the geographical distances are different to each person. So, the following questions are not asked in order to judge adequacy or effectiveness. They are to help the student name and claim what they have and what/who they might want to add. If a question is not applicable, feel free to say so. Brief answers are best.

- A. Who is your pastor? Pastors? Who is a non-family member you can go to with confidence of being listened to and cared about? If you don't now have such a person, who are some “nominees”? How might you approach one or more of them? If you do have such a person, what is your “agreement” or covenant or understanding between you two? Does that person know you consider him/her to be your pastor?
- B. Who is your supervisor? Who is the person(s) you would go to if you encountered a “sticky situation” or needed advice about a decision or situation you are facing professionally? If the DS is one such person, what limits might you experience in sharing with the person who can appoint (and un-appoint) you? If the DS is one such person, who else would you use for situations you could not bring to the DS?
- C. What family do you have nearby you? Are they a “refuge in the storm” – a people and place where you can get away from the stresses of ministry? What gifts and burdens do spouse, children, partners, and other family bring to you? What are the difficulties?
- D. What good friends do you have who are not church members? Are they in the community? Far away? How do you cultivate/maintain the friendship(s)? What gifts do they bring? What are the difficulties?
- E. What relationships do you have with clergy colleagues? Are you in a small group of clergy? Is there a gathering of clergy in the general area? Are there clergy who are close friends? Mentors? How do you maintain relationships with them?
- F. What have you built into your weekly and monthly regime that is caring for your physical, mental, and spiritual health? E.g.: habits, scheduled events, etc. Do you feel what you describe is adequate? If not, what would you add? In any case, what accountability do you have to keep these activities in your schedule?
- G. What is your understanding of the requirements of mandated reporter in your state of residence? Specifically, what must be reported? What are the contact numbers? What does the Discipline say about confidentiality and mandated reporting?

## “Images”

What you expect of yourself when you are at your best is shaped by many factors. Perhaps one of the strongest factors is your own image of a “good pastor.” And, conversely, of a “poor pastor.” Sometimes these images are more subconscious than stated goals or skills that are carefully considered. But, either way, they are tremendously powerful in determining your behaviors and your experience of yourself – your effectiveness, your authority, your self-satisfaction.

- a. Choose five of these images that you feel good about it and think they will enhance you ministry and care for the people the Lord has put under your care. Write two pages about the images tell why you think the are good images and how will it help you and the people to understand of your role as their pastor.
- b. Choose a few of the images you have listed and that are listed below, which repels you most as to be avoided?
  - a. Why?
  - b. What steps might you take to avoid turning into that image?
- c. What image do you think your congregation would choose?
  - a. If the image is different from what you selected in 2) above, how might you deal with the different expectations?
  - b. If the image is the same, what reflections do you have about the strengths and weaknesses of the similarity?
- d. How, where, and when have you experienced pastoral care?
  - a. From whom?
  - b. What were the circumstances?
  - c. How did it feel (positive and negative)?

Images of a pastor: Shepherd -- Sheep dog -- Counselor (professional) -- expert -- good friend -- wounded healer -- spiritual director -- coach -- help desk personnel-- theologian -- advice column except verbal -- big brother (sister) -- healer - fellow traveler with advice for the journey -- tribal elder -director (as in stage) -- village leader -- neutral listener -- moral compass -- hand holder -- moralist -- seed planter -- lecturer -- gardener -- judge -- Jesus reflector -- Bible teacher (asking what does the Bible say about this?) -- parent -- guide -- buddy -- and many others in the Bible and common par- lance.

- 1) What images would you add to the list?

## Communities surrounding the church

- 1) Read Hoeft (especially Chapter 2). Read Webb (especially Chapter 10).
- 2) Write a reflection on your church and the community surrounding the church. Include demographics (and the sources for them); include what others are saying about the church or the community. Are people proud of the place where they live? Where they worship? Have there been crises or calamities that have tested and/or scared the community? The church? Write 2-3 pages.

### Readings:

- 1) Read the required books (Scheib, Webb, Hoeft).
- 2) Write a separate reflection for each book read. Identify some of the ideas in each book that you want to put into practice. Include comment on how the context of the congregation you serve is like/unlike the context the book assumes.

## Listening Skills

- 1) Conduct 2 interviews.
  - a. You should recruit a volunteer church member or a community member for each interview. They should not be family or close friends. Tell them you are learning more about listening in an active and deep way. Set a time and place to meet for each interview. Ask for about 45 minutes of their time although it could be longer if they wish. Let them know that you want to learn from them whatever they would like to share. It could be about an ongoing health issue (such as diabetes) or an experience they remember – good or bad. It could be their work – what it’s like. It could be about a hobby. It could be about a loved one or a friend they have now or about someone who has moved away or has died. You can give them these and other examples and say: “What I would like to learn about is something or someone important to you.”
  - b. During the time together – this is NOT counseling – you should avoid filling in pauses in the conversation, offering solutions, having an agenda about where the story should go, offering ideas, telling your personal stories no matter how spot on they are, asking for numerous details that they don’t provide. Avoid supplying feelings: “That must have hurt.” “You have got to have been angry!” Of course, you may ask questions for clarification (“Did that happen first or second?”). Of course, you may react with surprise, sympathy, joy. The discipline to learn is not to insert yourself and your interpretation or expertise into the conversation. If you have questions about this, call the professor.
  - c. During the interview you should be listening for feelings. Feel free to ask about feelings. (“How does it feel to go to work that early?” “What is it like when you think of [name]?”)
- 2) Write a report on each of your experiences.

Two pages for each of your interview.

## Assignments Due Date: June 15, 2019

Please, send all assignments to the instructor, with copy to coshomework@garrett.edu