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IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

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Final
(Subject to change)
IS502 Vocation of Ministry
3 hours – 6:15-9:00pm Tuesday
SH 230

Co-faculty:

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Anticipated Enrollment: 70**Course Description**

This course seeks to ask and address the question, how is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained? The purpose of this course is to explore from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry.

Course Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

1. Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective;
2. Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace;
6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan consistent with vocational discernment.

Mode of Instruction

1. This course will be co-taught by two professors.
2. The class will be taught using three modes of instruction: (a) We will meet together as one large group for some levels of instruction and interaction; (b) The class will be organized into discussion groups which will function during a number of class sessions. The instructors will provide discussion questions for the groups; (c) The class will be organized into covenant discipleship groups that will emphasize "works

of piety” and “works of mercy,” which are integral to the course. At least part of the covenant group meeting time will overlap with scheduled course time.

Means of Student Evaluation

1. Student Participation – 20%

Related to course instruction

- Your attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you are absent [for whatever reasons] for more than three sessions (or the equivalent) you will receive a failing grade.
- By the conclusion of Module 3 you will have attended two services in a church(es) that is(are) ethnically different from you. This will be the basis for your reflection in your “In-Process” paper for Module 3. If you are currently worshipping in a cross-cultural setting (e.g., international students or other ethnic minority) you should speak with the instructors for ways in which you need to adjust this assignment.
- You are expected to fully participate in discussion groups during class related to each module.
- You are expected to attend your covenant discipleship group. These groups are student led. Meeting time is built into our Monday class period. If you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
- Participate in the 4-hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group.
- The reading requirement for this course is 1200 pages. You will submit a reading report to document the degree of your completion of required course reading. This reading report is due at the end of the semester.

Related to academic advising

- You will select an academic advisor by the end of the semester and have had one documented conversation with your advisor about your call to ministry and your seminary curricular plan. This is due by the end of the semester.
- You will present a curricular plan consistent with your understanding of your call to ministry (as you currently understand it) and have it signed by your official faculty advisor. This is due by Dec 7th, 2004.

2. “In-Process” Papers – 60%

You will prepare four five-page “in-process” papers that integrate course content, your understanding of your vocation of ministry and assessment surveys where appropriate. The first paper is due at the end of Module 1 and the second paper is due at the end of Module 2. The third paper is due at the end of Module 3. The fourth paper is due at the end of Module 4.

Module 1 paper is due on Sept 28.

Module 2 paper is due on Oct 19.

Module 3 paper is due on Nov 9.

Module 4 paper is due on Dec 7.

Group Presentations Dec 7.

3. Creative Project – 20%

Presentations will be made *on Dec 7*. Your covenant discipleship group will choose an artistic mode (painting, sculpture, poetry, creative writing, photo essay, original music composition) in order for your group to give expression to your understanding of “vocation of ministry.” Or, you may choose a project that communicates course-related material (devotional guide that focuses on “call” and “vocation”; series of lesson plans that deal with “call” and “vocation” for an age-specific class, etc.). Your work should not only reflect your collective and personal reflections but it should also include appropriate aspects of our course content. It is expected that this will be a fresh work. You are to get approval of your idea before proceeding. This project represents an important course assignment because it taps into other learning styles beside the visual and auditory. Each person in the group is expected to invest a *minimum of 8 hours* in the preparation of the project. Some will spend much more time than that. Projects will be shared in class at the end of the semester.

In addition to the presentation, each group will submit:

1. An individual log of your time investment and a brief description of your contribution to the group project.
2. A clear and succinct statement of the purpose of your project.
3. Learning objectives for observers (artistic) or participants (sermon series, etc.).
4. For art based projects: Submit a detailed discussion of the message you are portraying about “vocation” and “call.”
5. For text based projects: Submit the text material.

Creative Project Grading Criteria:

1. How substantial was your individual contribution to the project? (Did your contribution help to move the group project forward to completion in a significant way?)
2. How well did your group present the project to the class? (Did it reflect “one” mind or did it seem pieced together and disjointed?)
3. How well did your project integrate course content and personal reflection? (Does your project demonstrate an understanding of course content in addition to your personal journey?)
4. How well prepared was the written material your group submitted in conjunction with the project? (Style of writing, spelling, grammar, etc.)

Required Texts

Grenz, S. & Bell, R. (1995). Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Groothuis, R.M. (1997). Good new for women: A biblical picture of gender equality, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker; 19-63;121-144;189-229. [Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 9]

Guinness, O. (1998). The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life. Waco, TX: Word.

Sire, J. Habits of the Mind. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press

Smith, G. (1997). Listening to God in Times of Choice, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Foster, R. (1998). Celebration of Discipline, New York: Harper and Row.

Foster, R. (1998). Celebration of Discipline Study Guide, New York: Harper and Row

Willimon William, H., Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000

Required Reading – Journal

Collins, K. J. (1998). Spirituality and Critical Thinking: Are they really so different? Evangelical Journal, 16(1), 30-43. ISSN: 0741-1758

- “Electronic Reserve” means that you can access these materials through the Electronic Reserve Shelf of the Seminary’s Virtual Library.

Recommended Readings:

Brookfield S. D. Developing Critical Thinkers

Chilcotte P. Wesley Speaks on Vocation

Palmer Parker, J. Let Your Life Speak: Listening for The Voice of Vocation

Grading Policy

Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1” margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLA format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Between them, Dr. Mucherera and Professor Dawson will grade all submitted work and will seek to return your papers to you in a timely fashion. A 1/3 deduction in grade will be assessed for every workday that your paper is late. Late papers receive a grade, but no written feedback. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date with us, please see one of us BEFORE the assignment is due.

Incomplete Policy

A grade of “I” denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable** emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines

1. By the second week of class, you will be placed in a Covenant Discipleship Group of 6-7 persons. Because spiritual formation is an important part of this course, we have set aside the final 45 minutes of class time for you to meet. We hope that your schedules will permit you to meet longer than 45 minutes – as that is a bare minimum – and a longer meeting time will facilitate group cohesion and trust building. We have also built this time into our weekly schedule to facilitate your ease of meeting so that no one has to juggle his or her schedule to find a meeting time outside of class.

2. Your group will use Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline text and study guide. Each person should have a copy of both.
3. The group will meet twelve times during the course of the semester. The purpose of this group is to meet together to learn the inward, outward and corporate disciplines vital to spiritual growth. Group members will also hold each other accountable and encourage each other.
4. Each group will be student led. We anticipate that you will share leadership among all group members. At the conclusion of each session a volunteer will be sought to lead at the next session.
5. The leader guides the group through the exercises for sharing given in the study guide.
6. One student in each group will take attendance. This individual will supply an attendance report at the end of the semester. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
7. Each person should read in advance the chapter to be discussed.
8. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

A commitment to social justice is one of the emphases of our Wesleyan tradition. Each group will select a service/mission project. The project is to be completed AS A GROUP and must involve at least 4 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, your group can serve dinner at the Ronald McDonald House in Lexington, work for a soup kitchen, help out at God's Pantry, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person, etc. Please clear your project with either Dr. Mucherera or Professor Dawson. The group secretary [a.k.a. attendance taker] will collect from each person a 3x5 card confirming participation in the 4-hour project and describe one thing about the experience that stands out for him or her.

Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Vocation from a Wesleyan Perspective
Sept 7, 14, 21, 2004

Goals:

At the completion of module 1, you should:

1. Integrate your sense of what God desires with your personal giftedness;
2. Discuss the relationship between personal responsibility and choice in how you respond may respond to a perceived call of God;
3. Articulate how God is moving in your life regarding your vocation by using the aspects of vocation based on the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

Sept 7: The Nature of Vocation and Call.

This session provides an introduction to the concept of “call.” We will also get organized!

Reading List: Guinness, Ch. 1-7

In Class Organization: Organize class into small covenant groups. Organize class into discussion teams.

Sept 14: A Biblical and Wesleyan Perspective on Vocation and Call

This week focuses on a biblical and Wesleyan understanding of vocation and call

Listening in preparation for class

You will listen to Dr. Johnson’s 1995 chapel sermon on call. See online reserves on how to access this sermon. You can check it out from BLFisher reserve shelf. You can buy the tape from Media Center, 3rd Floor, Beeson Center.

Read for class: Willimon, *Calling & Character*- Introduction & Ch. 1; Smith Ch. 1-6
Listening to God in Times of Choices

Covenant Group Focus: Read Foster, Chapters 1 and 2

Sept 21: Vocation, Call, and Me

This session introduces you to the idea of personal vocational strengths, spiritual gifts, and their relationship to vocation and call

Reading List: Guinness, Ch. 15-22; Smith, Ch. 7-10; Read Foster, Chapter 3, Rom 12, I Cor 12:4-11, 28; Eph 4:11 (also I Cor 1:5-7; 12:29-30; I Cor 13:8; II Cor 8:7; I Thess. 5:20; I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6-7; Heb 2:4; I Pet 4:10-11)

Module 1 Means of Assessment: In-process position paper #1 – DUE Sept 28, 2004

Using the material from weeks 1, 2, & 3, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry and that also integrates this with your sense of your spiritual gifts. Be sure that you clearly interact with material from the required reading for this module. Typed-double space, 1” margins, 12 cpi font. 5-page limit.



Module 2: Grasp the relationship between the intellectual life and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry. Sept 28, Oct 5, Oct 12

Module Goals

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Articulate your own decision making process and the relative weight of thinking, spirituality, and theological reflection in their small groups and in writing.
2. Demonstrate your understanding of the roles of reasoning, theological reflection, and spirituality on your call to ministry through case study analysis.

Sept 28 Introduction to the Role of the Intellect in Christian vocation

Today we will introduce intellectual life as a Christian calling

Reading

Sire, 17-28, 71-86, 126-146, 178-204; Read Foster, Chapter 4

Oct 5 Intellectual life, vocation, & spirituality

Now we will grasp the relationship between reason and spirituality.

Reading: Sire, 87-125; Read Foster, Chapter 5; Collins article. BE sure you read the Collins article before coming to class!

Complete the DISC for Oct 12 class

Oct 12 Critical reasoning, spirituality, and me

Finally, you will discover more about yourself through the DISC survey and combine this practical information with the previous two-week's discussions to reflect upon your call to ministry.

Reading: Sire, 205-224; Read Foster, Chapter 6

Assignment: Bring your completed DISC with you to class.

Means of Evaluation for Module 2 – Second “In-Process” Position Paper – Due Oct 19.

Using the material from Module 1 AND Module 2, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry and that also integrates this with the DISC and your understanding of the relationship of reason and spirituality. Be sure that you integrate required reading from this module. Typed-double space, 1” margins, 12 pi font. 5 –page limit.



Module 3: Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry.

Oct 19, 26, Nov 2

Module Goals:

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Describe key issues and problems, which affect ethnic minorities and their leadership;
2. Explain the reality of racism and gender issues, their origins and the negative impact they have on building the Kingdom of God;
3. Discuss how racism affects inter-ethnic and inter-church relations and how to effectively minister in such contexts.

During this module [or before] you will attend two worship services in church(es) that is culturally different from you.

Oct 19: Ministry in the Worldwide Kingdom of God

Vocation of ministry in a multi-ethnic, global Kingdom of God

Required Reading: Read Foster, Chapter 7

Oct 26: Ethnic realities in America

Reading: *Silent Racism*- Internet Article ; Read Foster, Chapter 8
<http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=4757107&db=aph>

Nov 2: Gender and the Vocation of Ministry

Men & women working together in the Kingdom of God. Biblical foundations for women in ministry

Reading: Grootius; Read Foster, Chapter 9

Means of Assessment for Module 3—Due Nov 9, 2004:

During this module you will attend the worship services of a church where the church is ethnically different from yourself. This can be 2 services at the same church or one service at two different churches. The paper will focus on your experience of being a minority in this congregation, your awareness of prejudicial beliefs or myths and how you plan to address them, and your projection on their relative ease or discomfort of working with women in ministry.



Module 4: Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct
Nov 9, 16, 30.

Goals for Module 4:

By the completion of the module, you should

1. Discuss the importance of the character of and the maintenance of a sense of wholeness by a Christian minister;
2. Identify ways to maintain emotional and physical boundaries with people;
3. Identify ways in which boundary violations occur;
4. Explain the relationship between moral formation, individual integrity, and the vocation of ministry.

Nov 9: Moral formation & integrity

Reading: Grenz & Bell, Ch. 1, 2; Read Foster, Ch. 10, Willimon, Ch. 2

Nov 16: Morality & Boundaries, Part I

Reading: Grenz & Bell, Ch. 3, 4, & 6; Read Foster, Ch. 11, Willimon, Ch 3

Nov 30: Boundary issues, Part II

Reading: Grenz & Bell, Ch. 5 & 7; Read Foster, Chapters 12-13

Means of Evaluation for Module 4 – Fourth “In Process” Position Paper—December 7

Using the material from Modules 1-4, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your understanding of the place of character, moral formation, personal wholeness, and boundaries in

the vocation of ministry. Be sure to integrate required readings from this module. Typed—double space, 1” margins, 12 cpi font. 5 page limit



Module 5: Articulating a coherent narrative of one’s own call into God’s ministry

Dec 7, Each Covenant Discipleship group will work together to develop a creative presentation of their understanding of their vocation of ministry.

The class professors reserve the right to make modifications to this syllabus.