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IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

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IS502 - Vocation of Ministry
Fall 2005
W 6:16 – 9:00 pm
Provisional Syllabus

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Office Hours: T 9:30-10:45 am;
W 4:00-5:45 pm;
and by appointment

Course Description (highlights on our journey)

IS502 addresses the question, “How is a vocation to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained?” This course challenges you to explore, from a Wesleyan perspective, the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation.

Course Objectives (targets I aim for you to hit)

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 the church and in the world.
2. Grasp the relationship between spiritual growth and theological reflection in the practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate respect for and sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues, especially with regard to their importance in ministry;
4. Understand the importance of a Christian’s integrity and moral formation in ministry, clearly comprehending boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to a life of personal and social holiness through immersion in the means of grace and service;
6. Articulate a coherent narrative of your own call, as well as God-given gifts and graces for ministry; and
7. Write a personal vision for ministry, a “Rule of Life” that guides and guards your ministry.

Modes of Instruction (methods to help us learn)

You’ll experience three main learning models in this class: (a) First, we will meet together as one large group for instruction and interaction; (b) Second, you’ll create covenant discipleship groups within the class that will explore Christian conduct and character, and (c) Third, the discipleship groups will participate in assigned projects so you can directly experience some issues we study in class.

Required Textbooks (reading that forms and informs)

- Canham, E. (1999). Heart Whispers: Benedictine Wisdom for Today. Nashville: Upper Room.
- Grenz, S. & Bell, R. (2001). Betrayal of Trust: Confronting and Preventing Clergy Sexual Misconduct. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Groothuis, R. (1997). Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Guinness, O. (1998). The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life, Waco, TX: Word.
- Harper, S. (1983). Devotional Life in the Wesleyan Tradition. Nashville: Upper Room.
- Sire, James W. (2000). Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Recommended Reading (a wish list to keep)

- Muto, S. and van Kaam, A. (1994). Divine Guidance: Seeking to find and follow the will of God. Pittsburg: Epiphany.
- Roberts, B. (1891, reprinted 1992). Ordaining Women: Biblical and Historical Insights. Indianapolis: Light and Life Press.
- Foster, Richard. (2003, 25th anniversary). Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. San Francisco: Harper.
- Morris, D. (1991). Yearning to Know God's Will: A workbook for discerning God's guidance for your life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Course Assignments (experiences to help things sink in)

- Spiritual Journey Paper (15 points)
- Cross-Cultural Identity Encounter and Reflection Paper (15 points)
- Social Justice Project (15 points)
- Rule of Life Paper (24 points)
- Journaling for *Heart Whispers* (11 points)
- Course reading (10 points)
- Active participation in covenant group (10 points)

Course Grading Criteria (standards to go by)

You'll find the following descriptions on p. 29 of your *ATS Academic Catalog, 2004-2006*:

A = exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

I'll calculate your course grade based on a 100-point scale:

95 - A	80 - B-
90 - A -	77.5 - C+
85 - B+	75 - C
82.5 - B	72.5 - C-

Incomplete Work

The official end of each term is 4:00 pm on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. **A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment.** If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F" (p. 29, 2004-2006 Academic Catalog).

Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines

1. Because teamwork and spiritual formation are important parts of this course, I have built time for group work into our weekly schedule so that you will rarely have to juggle your schedule to find a meeting time outside of class.
2. The groups will hold one introductory meeting, then for the remainder of the semester the groups will focus on the ten chapters in *Heart Whispers*, which explores the traditional Benedictine Rule of Life. Each of these chapters should be related to holiness of heart and life, both as a gift from God, and your responsibility for growth in personal and social holiness. Group members are expected to contribute biblical references, resources from reading and personal experiences directly related to the each subject for discussion.
3. Each group will be student lead. I 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.
4. In order to participate faithfully in group discussions, each group member should read in advance and journal about the chapter to be discussed. (You'll

use the exercise page at the end of each chapter to prompt your reflections and writing.)

5. Each group should commit to keep your conversations confidential among group members.
6. A grading rubric will be used in class to assess participants effectiveness in group processes.
7. Since our faith is tested and matured in community, your presence, participation, and attitude are critical to this part of our class being meaningful and formative.

Weekly Overview - provided the first day of class