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IS 502 Vocation of Ministry

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IS502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry
Spring 2005 (February-May)
9:00-11:45:am - Wednesday
3 Semester Units
Anticipated Class Enrollment: 70 students

Co-faculty:

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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 spiritual growth and theological reflection in the 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 a life of personal and social holiness through immersion in the means of grace and development of a "Rule of Life."
6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry as well as one's God-given gifts and graces for ministry.
7. Project a personal vision for ministry and a curricular plan consistent with one's vocational discernment and vision.

Mode of Instruction

1. This course will be co-taught by two professors.
2. The class will be taught using two modes of instruction: (a) We will meet together as one large group for differing levels of instruction, interaction and discussion; (b) The class will be organized into covenant discipleship groups that will emphasize "means of grace", 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 - 35% of Final Grade

Related to course instruction

- Your attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you are absent (for whatever reasons) for more than three class sessions (or the equivalent) you will receive a failing grade. An attendance sheet will be provided for class sessions.
- By the conclusion of Module 2 you will have attended two services in a church(es) that is (are) ethnically different from you *or* engaged in two one hour conversations with two persons from different ethnic backgrounds than your own. This will be the basis for your reflection in your "In-Process" paper for Module 2. (5%)
- You are expected to attend your covenant discipleship group. Every group member will have the opportunity to lead a group meeting. Meeting time is built into our Wednesday class period. Specific guidelines and expectations are presented below under the heading "Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines". (15%)
- Participate in a 4-hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group. Specific guidelines and expectations are presented below under the heading "Social Justice Project Guidelines". (5%)
- The reading requirements for this course are listed under "Required Texts" and "Required Reading". You will prepare a report to document the degree of your completion of required course reading and listening on the appropriate form in the course/group notebook. This reading report is due at the end of the semester. (10%)

2. "In-Process" Papers - 65% of Final Grade

You will prepare three five-page "in-process" papers that integrate course content, your understanding of your vocation of ministry and assessment survey

where appropriate. The first paper (23%) is due at the end of Module 1 and the second paper (20%) is due at the end of Module 2. The third paper (22%) is due at the end of Module 3. Each student will be provided clear guidelines for paper expectations and criteria for grading. These guidelines are presented on the handout entitled, "Expectations and Grading Criteria for IS 502 VOM Module Papers".

Module 1 paper is due on March 22, 2005

Module 2 paper is due on April 26, 2006

Module 3 paper is due on May 10, 2006

Required Texts

Foster, R. (1978) Celebration of Discipline. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Foster, R. (1983) Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline. San Francisco: Harper Collins.

Smith, G. (1999). Courage and Calling: Embracing Your God-Given Potential, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Stevens, P. (1999). The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work and Ministry.

Rediger, L. (2003). Beyond the Scandals: A Guide to Healthy Sexuality for Clergy. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Woodley, R. (2001). Living in Color: Embracing God's Passion for Diversity. Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books.

Choose one of the following:

Clouse, B. and R. (1989). Women in Ministry: Four Views. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Groothuis, R.M. (1997). Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

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 (Modern Language Association Style) format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Professors Seamands and Hampton will provide both "timely" and "substantive" feedback to students regarding their assignments. "Timely" response means that

for assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the professors will have work marked, graded, and returned within one week of its submission; if the class has more than 40 students (and this one does), the professors may take up to two weeks. In addition, the professors will provide "substantive" feedback that alerts students to what they have done well and how they might improve their performance in subsequent work. 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.

Grading Guidelines

The grading guidelines found in the 2004-2006 ATS academic catalog will be used for grade assignment. The specific grade format for this course is:

A	95	C	73
A-	90	C-	70
B+	87	D+	67
B	83	D	63
B-	80	D-	60
C+	77	F	below 60

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 5-6 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 be encouraged to develop a group commitment or covenant that will incorporate the use of Celebration of Discipline and Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline. Each person should have a copy of both.

3. The purpose of this group is to meet together to learn the "means of grace" affirmed throughout Church history, do the related disciplines, hold each other accountable, and encourage each other.
4. The group will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the next eleven weeks it will meet and focus on the inward, outward, and corporate disciplines that facilitate "growth in grace".
5. Each student in the group will be given the opportunity to lead a covenant group session. At the conclusion of each session a volunteer will be sought to lead at the next session.
6. The leader guides the group through the questions from the Study Guide for Celebration of Discipline. (See chart below for dates and assignments).
7. Each student is required to come to group with a written response to the questions for each week as well as having completed the reading from Celebration of Discipline prior to group meeting. Completion of reading and response to questions is to be documented on the appropriate form in the course/group notebook. In addition, each student's responses to questions will be added to the group notebook to be turned in at the end of the semester and reviewed by the professors.
8. One student in each group will take attendance. Attendance is to be documented on the appropriate form in the course/group notebook. Please NOTE that if you miss more than three discipleship group meetings (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
9. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

ASSIGNED CHAPTERS AND QUESTIONS:

Date	Chapters	Study Guide Readings and Questions
2/8	Divide and establish group membership	
2/15	Introduction and Chapter 1	Pages 1-15, page 12, questions # 3,7,8

2/22	Chapter 2 and 3	Pages 19-27, page 21, questions #1, 2. page 26, questions #4, 7.
3/1	Chapters 4 and 5	Pages 28-35, page 30, questions #1 and 6; page 34 questions #2 and 5.
3/8	Chapter 6	Pages 39-43; page 41, questions #1, 5, 7
3/15	Chapter 7	Pages 44-47; page 46, questions #1, 5, 8.
3/22	Chapter 8	Pages 48-51; page 50; questions #1, 6, 8.
3/29	Chapter 9	Pages 52-55; page 54; questions #2, 4, 6.
4/12	Chapter 10	Pages 59-62; page 61; questions #1, 5, 7.
4/19	Chapter 11	Pages 63-67; page 65-66; questions #2, 4, 6.
4/26	Chapter 12	Pages 68-71; page 70; questions #3, 4, 9.
5/3	Chapter 13	Pages 72-75; page 74; questions #1, 3, 6.

Social Justice Project Guidelines

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 Prof. Hampton or Prof. Seamands. The group is to document on the appropriate forms in the course/group notebook: 1) the attendance of each member, 2) the nature of the project, 3) a group statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) describing how this chosen project is understood theologically as an expression of the groups/individuals participation in the "Kingdom of God", and 4) a group

statement about what 3 aspects of the experience stands out for them as significant. This is due at the end of the semester.

MODULES:

Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Call and Vocation from a Wesleyan Perspective

February 8, 15, 22; March 1, 8, 15, 22

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 or 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.

February 8: The Nature of Vocation and Call.

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

Reading List: Smith, Introduction. Chapters 1-2.

Covenant Group: Organize class into small covenant groups.

February 15: 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: Stevens, Chapters 1-3

Covenant Group: Begin covenant groups.

DISC inventory - to be completed by February 17th

February 22: Biblical and Wesleyan Perspectives on Vocation and Call

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

Reading List: Smith, Chapters 3-4

Stevens, Chapters 4-5

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

March 1: DISCovering the Way we Lead

You will discover more about yourself through the DISC survey and combine this practical information with the previous lectures and discussions to reflect upon your call to ministry.

Reading List: Smith, Chapter 5
Stevens, Chapters 6-7

Covenant Group: Continue Covenant Groups

March 8 Critical thinking and Ministry

Today we will explore the role of critical thinking in the vocation of ministry.

Reading List: Smith, Chapter 7
Stevens, Epilogue

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

March 15 Ministry of the Whole People of God

This class will focus on the various forms of ministry through which persons can fulfilling their calling

Reading List: Stevens, Chapters 8-9

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

March 22 Articulating A Vision for Ministry

This class will focus on helping you articulate where you currently believe God has called or is calling you and what that means for you in terms of vocation.

Reading List: Woodley, Chapters 1-5

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

Means of Evaluation for Module 1- First "In-Process" Position Paper - DUE on March 22, 2005

Using the material from the first five weeks, develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of the nature of Christian ministry, your call to the vocation of ministry, your sense of spiritual gifting and your personal limitations. Be sure that you clearly integrate information from the required

readings and lectures. This information is to be referenced following the MLA format. Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12 cpi font 7-page limit.

Module 2: Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry.

March 29, April 12, 19

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 (are) culturally different from you *or* engage in two conversations with two persons who are from a different ethnic background than you.

March 29: Ministry in the Worldwide Kingdom of God

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

Reading List: Woodley, Chapters 6-9

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

April 12: Ethnic realities in America

Ethnic nature of America and the sober realities needing to be faced.

Reading List: Woodley, Chapters 10-15

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

April 19: Gender and the Vocation of Ministry

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

Reading List: *Groothius or Clouse & Clouse*, entire book;
Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

Means of Evaluation for Module 2 - Second "In-Process" Position Paper - Due on April 26, 2005.

During this module you will attend twice the worship services of a church where the church is ethnically different from yourself or engage in two conversations with two persons from different ethnic backgrounds than yours. Your paper is to focus on your awareness of your own prejudicial beliefs or myths, and how you plan to address them. Also, focus on what you learned from the worship services you participated in or conversations you engaged in. Finally, in this paper you are to reflect on your relative ease or discomfort of working with women in ministry. Be sure that you clearly integrate information from the required readings and lecture information. This information is to be referenced following the MLA format. Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12cpi font 5-page limit.

Module 3: Understand the importance of character, moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct

April 26, May 3, 10

Goals:

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.
5. Clearly define a Rule of Life that will help set the compass for your life and ministry.

April 26: Character, Moral formation & integrity

Reading List: Smith, Chapters 6, 8-10

Covenant Group: Continue covenant groups.

May 3: Morality & Boundaries, Part I

Reading List: Rediger, Chapters 1-7

Covenant Group: Last covenant group meeting.

May 10: Boundary issues, Part II

Reading List: Rediger, Chapters 8-10

Means of Evaluation for Module 3 - Third "In-Process" Position Paper - "A Rule of Life" - Due on May 10, 2005.

Using the material from the class (especially the last 3 weeks), develop a vocational position paper that reflects your current understanding of your call to the vocation of ministry in light of the place of moral character, integrity and appropriate boundaries in ministry. This is commonly referred to as a "Rule of Life." Your specific "Rule of Life" must not be longer than one page (Examples will be distributed). The remaining five pages will both add support to your rule as well as demonstrate a thorough integration of the course materials (readings and lectures) into your personal life. Describe the present state of your vision for your future in ministry, particularly the kind of personal, family and institutional commitments you are willing to make to fulfill your calling to ministry.

The completion of this document will allow you to meet a graduation requirement of constructing a "Rule of Life" paper; and it should help you choose Seminary courses that will best prepare you for fulfilling your vision for ministry. It will also provide material for responding to written and personal interview questions regarding your call, motivation and preparation for ministry. Instructions on creating a Rule of Life will be given in class. The paper is to be referenced following the MLA format. Typed-double space, 1" margins, 12 cpi font. 5-page limit.
