

Course of Study School of Ohio
524 – Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Summer 2020: **August 3-7 and 10-13, daily Zoom Session at 9:30 a.m. Eastern Time**
Each week will include a mix of synchronous sessions in Zoom & asynchronous work in Populi.

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This course is the capstone to the student's basic course of study. Its focus is the integration of the biblical, theological, and practical aspects of ministry.

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a Trinitarian theology for the practice of ministry.
2. State clearly the nature and mission of the Church and its relation to pastoral ministry.
3. Demonstrate the ability to reflect theologically.
4. Develop a plan for lifelong theological reading, reflection, and growth.

Texts

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

Greenleaf, Robert K. "The Servant as Leader," Chapter I of Servant Leadership: A Journey Into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness. (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).
or "The Servant as Leader" booklet for \$10.00 at

<https://www.greenleaf.org/products-page/the-servant-as-leader/>

Wood, Charles and Ellen Blue. Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry (Nashville, Abingdon, 2008)

Runyon, Theodore. The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

Assignments for Week One, August 3-7

Reading

The Book of Discipline: section "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task"
(paragraphs ¶102-105)

Attentive to God: Preface, Introduction and Part One (through page 24)

The "Servant as Leader"

Assignments #1 & #2 for the 1st Weekend (Due August 3 – students should upload the assignments on Populi in the Assignments section of the course page)

Write 3-4 pages (#1) on developing the aptitude (capacity & disposition) to pay attention theologically. How can you develop this "way of paying attention to God, and to everything else in its 'God-relatedness?'" How does the Wesleyan Quartet guide us to appropriate Christian Witness? How are knowing, being and doing interwoven for you? How do we understand through scripture? How does one maintain the creative tension between vision and discernment? How can you help your parishioners grow in their calling to be theologians?

Write 2 pages of the first draft of your credo (#2). A credo is a written statement of belief describing *your understanding* of essential Christian doctrine. *Do not* copy or quote from The Book of Discipline or other sources. This is not an exercise in repeating doctrinal formulations that you have learned. This is an exercise in expressing in your own terms what you believe, as part of the journey shared with others. Your credo should flow as a coherent narration of your own project as a pastoral theologian and servant leader. Your credo should include at least a paragraph on *each* of the following topics, don't tell everything about the topics, rather *focus* on how they are meaningful in your life and ministry:

Bible

Trinitarian Theology

Human Situation in History, including how we face suffering and evil

Salvation/Liberation as we move into God's unfolding future.

The Nature of the Church and its Future

The first draft will not be graded but will be used in class discussions and developed further.

Overview Week One:

- ❑ The art of being a pastoral theologian
- ❑ Biblical reflection
- ❑ Our Theological Task
- ❑ What is it to pay attention to God?
- ❑ Cultivating theological judgment: vision and discernment
- ❑ Theology from a United Methodist perspective
- ❑ Servant Leadership

Assignments for Week Two, August 10-13

Reading

Attentive to God: pages 27-29

The New Creation: pages 1-167 and 222-233.

Written Assignments #3, #4 & #5 for the 2nd Week (students should upload the assignments on Populi in the Assignments section of the course page by the date listed)

Write a 3-4 pages (#3) Due at the beginning of class on Monday, August 10. Interact with the assigned readings to reflect on an issue according to the following directions. Reflect theologically on a contemporary issue (spiritual, local, national or global) that impacts the life of your community and/or congregation.

Briefly describe (half – full page) the issue and how it relates to your congregation and/or community. What is the key point of focus? Are there specific facts that help to understand the situation? Is there a relevant history?

What are the theological principles that help to understand the situation? As you use biblical texts, specifically state how they fit in the situation (be aware of the surrounding text too) and relate them to something from the assigned readings. Draw on some of the principles from “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” (paragraphs 101 or 104) to help analyze or point to action in this situation. What Wesleyan principles from The New Creation speak to this situation (such as: Grace, image of God, role of experience, personal or social holiness, Orthopathy)? Does anything from the “Servant as Leader” guide you in this situation?

Do these principles lead to a particular analysis of the situation? How do you balance

conflicting principles or viewpoints? What responsibilities do you as a leader have in the situation? What responsibilities do the members of the congregation or community have? What actions are called for? How does this call relate to the current state of the congregation? Are there small steps they can take?

Write one page each on three of the Incidents and Situations that are found in Part Two for a **total of 3-4 pages (#4). Due at the beginning of class on Wednesday, August 12.** Follow the questions in the last 3 paragraphs of page 28:

What is going on here? (center stage in context of larger patterns and interactions). How is God involved here? What are the theological issues?

How would you begin to deal with the situation? What is going on *with you* as you read the case, and how is God involved *with you* as you deal with the case?

The final draft of your credo (#5). Due at the beginning of class on Thursday, August 13.

Overview Week Two:

- ❑ The art of being a pastoral theologian
- ❑ Biblical reflection
- ❑ Our theological task: cultivating theological judgment
- ❑ Rethinking Sanctification
- ❑ Renewing the image of God through the transformation of grace → the new creation
- ❑ Orthopathy: participation in spiritual reality that marks genuine faith

Participation and Grading

Grades will be based on participation and assignments. Since this is an online course, class participation will take place in the Zoom sessions and in work including discussions on Populi. Faithful and authentic engagement with the issues of the course is expected. Participation and engagement will determine 15% of your grade. Assignments will constitute 85% of your final grade for the class. Grading will be based on articulation of the faith (biblical and theological). Late assignments will not be accepted.

Academic Honor Policy

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student. Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own. Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination. Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work with the work of another whether published or unpublished

(including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions:

- (1) Warning
- (2) Probation
- (3) Suspension for the remainder of the course
- (4) Dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio
- (5) Grade of Fail for the course.

Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.