

COS 524 – Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Summer 2020

Methodist Theological School in Ohio

***Synchronous online classes via the COSSO's Zoom account will occur on June 26-27 & July 17-18, 2020 (see below for a detailed schedule). Attendance at these sessions is non-negotiable (just as it would be if the course were meeting face to face in Delaware, OH). Please assess your technology situation ahead of time. If you have questions about technology, please contact Grace Wallace, the coordinator of the COS of Ohio at gwallace@mtso.edu.

Professor Jason Vickers, Ph.D.

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Course Description:

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.

Course Objectives:

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.

Required Texts:

Jason E. Vickers, *Minding the Good Ground: A Theology for Church Renewal*. ISBN 978-1602583603.

Charles Wood and Ellen Blue, *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry*. ISBN 978-0687651627.

Recommended Texts:

Lacey Warner and Ken Carder, *The Grace to Lead: Practicing Leadership in the Wesleyan Tradition*. ISBN: 978-0938162537.

William Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. ISBN: 978-1501804908.

Assignments:

- a. **Critical Book Reviews (2)** – Students will write critical book reviews of both of the required texts. Critical book reviews should be no less than 5 and no more than 7 pages (typed, double-spaced). No cover pages. Simply put your first and last name at the top and the title of the volume you will be summarizing. The next line should be the beginning of your critical summary. Critical summaries should provide a narrative overview of the whole of the book. Provide summaries of each chapter rather than focusing your summary on one or two chapters of the book. Do not use lengthy quotations from the book. No other sources should be consulted or referenced.

In the final ½ page to page, identify what you take to be the strengths and weaknesses of the book. Also indicate what relevance the book has for Christian life and ministry.

- b. **Final Paper** – Students will write a 8-10 paper articulating their understanding of the work of ministry. Students will identify biblical and theological foundations for their understanding, and they will make connections between those foundations and the practical aspects of ministry. More specifically, students will discuss how the doctrines of God (the Trinity), Jesus Christ (especially the work of Christ or the atonement), the Holy Spirit, and the church shape their thinking about and approach to ministry.
- c. **Online Participation and Discussion** – Students will attend 4 two-hour class sessions on June 26-27 and July 17-18 via the COSSO's Zoom account. These sessions will be online. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory.

In addition, students will be required to read and respond to a series of prompts from the professor in an online forum in Populi between June 29 and July 17. The forum will be asynchronous, meaning that students will not have to be online on any particular dates or at any particular time so long as they respond to the prompts and interact with the professor and one another.

Due Dates:

Critical Book Review #1 (*Minding the Good Ground*) will be due on **June 26**. Students should submit their reviews on the first day of class. Late work will not be accepted.

Critical Book Review #2 (*Attentive to God*) will be due on **July 17**. Students should submit their reviews on the first day of the second weekend of class. Late work will not be accepted.

The final paper (see above) will be due on **July 25** (one week after the conclusion of the second weekend of class. Students should plan to email their final papers to the professor's email address (see top of the syllabus). Late work will not be accepted.

Class Schedule and Topics – all times are eastern standard (Columbus, OH time zone)

June 26 – We will meet online from **5-7pm** to discuss the nature of the Church in Trinitarian perspective (Ch. 1 of *Minding the Good Ground*).

June 27 – We will meet online from **9-11am** to discuss the mission of the Church and the sacramental life of the church in Trinitarian perspective (chs. 2 and 3 of *Minding the Good Ground*).

July 17 – We will meet online from **5-7pm** to discuss theology and discernment in ministry (Part One of *Attentive to God*)

July 18 – We will meet online from **9-11am** to discuss how to think theologically about specific incidents and situations in ministry (Parts Two and Three of *Attentive to God*).

In addition to these dates and times for synchronous online learning, an online forum will be available in Populi from June 29 through July 17. In this forum, the professor will provide a series of discussion prompts related to theology and the work of ministry and facilitate asynchronous discussion around those prompts. Students will be required to respond to these prompts and interact with one another and with the professor during this time. Students will not have to be online at a particular time or on particular days to meet this requirement.

ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling academic requirements must be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism.

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 the published or unpublished words or ideas of another [including online resources] as if it were one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly (whether intentionally or unintentionally) 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) failing grade for the course.

Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's district superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry.