

Course of Study School of Ohio
Hosted at Methodist Theological School of Ohio

COS 323 – CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Spring 2021: April 16-17 & May 14-15

“Don't think that you need a lot of equipment for this: You are the equipment.”

- Mark 6.8-9 in *The Message*, by Eugene Peterson

“Ministers never engage in ministry from pure motives, but always with a mixture of altruism and ego aggrandizement.”

- Philip Browning Helsel, *Pastoral Care and Counseling*, p. 107

Instructor:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to practices of congregational care and the pastor's responsibility in caregiving. Most of the sessions will be conducted synchronously on Populi per the schedule below. Some asynchronous sessions will be required before each of the two weekends of the course as well.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Implement and oversee appropriate types of care in varieties of settings, including prisons, hospitals, nursing facilities, and homes.
2. Organize caring ministries within the congregation.
3. Discern and implement appropriate boundaries, knowing when and to whom to refer people, and when and when not to share information.
4. Reflect on and practice skills of sensitive caregiving.
5. Come to a deeper understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection on their families of origin.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Helsel, Philip Browning. *Pastoral Care and Counseling: An Introduction – Care for Stories, Systems, and Selves*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-8091-5390-9

Roth, Brad. *God's Country: Faith, Hope, and the Future of the Rural Church*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2017 ISBN: 978-1-5138-0161-2

“Now, with God's help, I shall become myself.”

- Søren Kierkegaard, quoted in Brad Roth, *God's Country*, p. 140

“Emotionally intelligent people make good leaders because they are free from preoccupations with unresolved issues from the past.”

- Edward Wimberly, *African American Pastoral Care and Counseling*, p. 88

DUE DATES

March 26 – 100 word post on Introductory video

April 10 – Reflection on Helsel

April 16 – Reflection on Roth

May 14 – Reflection on Wimberly

My 14 – 21-Day Challenge reflection

Wimberly, Edward. *African American Pastoral Care and Counseling: The Politics of Oppression and Empowerment*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006. ISBN: 082981681X

ASSIGNMENTS

1. DUE by March 26, 2021 (10% of grade)

Two videos, “Introduction to the Professor and the Course” and an Easter message, “When is the End *Not* the End?” will be available on Populi course web site after March 15. Write a *maximum* 100 response to the following three bullet points and post it on the Populi course web site:

- What you are most looking forward to in this course.
- What you are most concerned about regarding this course.
- One insight you gained from Dr. Binau’s Easter message. (If you didn’t gain any insights you can offer a constructive criticism!)

2. DUE by Saturday, April 10, 2021 (20% of grade)

Read *Pastoral Care and Counseling: An Introduction – Care for Stories, Systems, and Selves* by Philip Browning Helsel. Write a page 1500-2000 word paper (approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages) addressing each of the bullet points listed below (which are related to the three sections of the book).

Submit your reflection to the “Assignments” tab on the Populi course web site with the title as follows: Helsel reflection – your last name. (For example: Helsel reflection – Binau)

1. Section I: Care for Stories

- The author contends that carefully listening to/attending to someone’s story is an act of care that allows the person to feel remembered by God. What are some of the skills/gifts he believes are necessary for a minister to have in order to provide good care for someone’s story? Cite at least one example of a skill/gift that you have in this regard.
- The author also contends that it is vitally important for ministers to attend to their own stories. Why does he believe this is important and what is one aspect of your own story that you would like to understand better?

2. Section II: Care for Systems

- Every person’s individual story is shaped by, and lived out within, a number of systems. Accordingly and so the author believes that systemic change is possible and that as an act of care our ministries should advocate for change when necessary. How did Jesus’ own ministry seek to change systems that oppressed people? Cite and explain at least two examples.
- The author identifies three groups of people in Section II who suffer from systemic injustice: the marginalized, the abused, and the addicted. What insights did you gain from this section about your own ministry and how you might advocate for systemic change on behalf of one or more of these groups? Cite and explain at least two examples.

3. Section III: Care for Selves

- Caring for the stories of others (and the systems that influence them) will almost certainly lead to burnout if we do not care for ourselves. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being utterly useless and 10 being amazingly useful) how useful did you find this section of the book regarding your own self care? Give at least two examples of things you found useful or useless.
- What is one self-care activity that you currently practice and how is it helpful? What is one self-care practice you would like to begin and how do you imagine it could be helpful?

3. DUE by Friday, April 16, 2021: Reflection on Roth (20% of grade)

Read *God's Country: Faith, Hope, and the Future of the Rural Church*, by Brad Roth.

Write a page 1500-2000 word paper (approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages) addressing the bullet points listed below.

Submit your reflection to the "Assignments" tab on the Populi course web site with the title as follows: Roth reflection – your last name. (For example: Roth reflection – Binau)

1. In Chapter 1 Roth lays out his overall purpose for writing the book. Roth introduces the term "ecclesioculture" and invites us to embrace this concept as a way of understanding the realities *and* the possibilities of rural churches.
 - Explain in your own words what you think he means by "ecclesioculture."
2. Roth suggests in Chapter 1 that rural churches are generally either *idealized* or *disparaged*.
 - Which view of rural churches, *idealizing* or *disparaging* more accurately describes the attitude of the people *you* serve regarding rural churches? Explain how you arrived at this conclusion and cite *at least three* examples from your current ministry that support the conclusion you have reached.
3. Chapters 2-9 each focus on a particular action (a verb) that Roth believes needs attention if rural churches are to thrive. Select three of these nine actions (praise, abide, watch, pray, grow, work the edges, learn to die, befriend, dream) that deserve attention in the church(es) you are now serving.
 - Give *at least two examples* from your ministry for each of the three actions you selected that have led to see this an action deserving special attention. In short: **Why** do these areas of ministry need attention in your setting(s)?
 - Cite *at least two things* you learned from the book about each of the three actions you selected that will help you do better ministry in your context. In short: **What** did you learn from the book that will help you lead the people you serve in each of these areas?

4. DUE by Friday, May 14, 2021: 21-Day Challenge (15% of grade)

Engage the "21-Day Race Equity Challenge" from the Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC: <https://myersparkpres.org/project/better-when-were-back-together>

Use 21 days any time before May 14 (they don't have to be consecutive days) to engage this challenge. Daily exercises involve reading, viewing, listening, and reflecting. (You do not have to sign up for the "pledge" on the website, though you can if you want to). A "tracking tool" is included at the end of this syllabus and is available on the course web site for you to

record which resources you accessed and your reflections on your experiences. A few sentences of reflection for each day will suffice, though you can write as much as you'd like. You need to respond to only one category per day (notice, connection, engagement, action, reflection) though you can respond to as many as you'd like. Use a fresh copy of the tracking tool for each day and assemble all 21 pages into one document.

Submit your reflection to the "Assignments" tab on the Populi course web site with the title as follows:
21-Day Challenge – your last name.

(For example: 21-Day Challenge – Binau)

5. DUE by Friday, May 14, 2021: Reflection on Wimberly (20% of grade)

Read *African American Pastoral Care and Counseling: The Politics of Oppression and Empowerment*, by Edward Wimberly. Write a Write a page 1500-2000 word paper (approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages) addressing the following three items listed below.

Submit your reflection to the "Assignments" tab on the Populi course web site with the title as follows:

Wimberly reflection – your last name.

(For example: Wimberly reflection – Binau)

- Three terms/concepts are prominent in Wimberly's book:
 - "recruited"
 - "political theology"
 - "modernity"

Define any two of these concepts in your own words and cite an example from your own ministry of where you have encountered this concept (perhaps without even knowing at the time what you were encountering).

- The United Methodist Church requires this book as a text for COS 323. Citing examples from the book and from your own ministry, make a case for whether you agree or disagree with this requirement.
- Wimberly includes many, many vignettes in his book – some from his own life, some from literature, some form the real life stories of other people. Cite any *two* such vignettes you choose (reference the pages on which they are found). For each vignette:
 - Explain in your own words the point(s) you believe Wimberly is trying to make by including the vignette.
 - Explain in what way(s) and for what purpose(s) you could use these vignettes in your own ministry.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: (15% of grade)

You are expected to participate verbally, physically, emotionally and spiritually in the course in appropriate ways. This means you are expected to offer your ideas without dominating the discussion, be physically calm but not to the point of falling asleep, be vulnerable without wearing your emotional

life “on your sleeve,” and open yourself to the leading of the Spirit without insisting on the superiority of your theology or piety.

PROBABLE COURSE SCHEDULE

“Introduction to the Professor and the Course” and “When Is the End *Not* the End?” Easter Reflection – videos available on Populi course web site after March 15.

Friday, April 16, 2021

3:00-3:55 pm LISTENING: CARING FOR STORIES

4:05-4:55 pm FAMILY SYSTEMS: CARING FOR SELVES

BREAK for Dinner

7:00-7:55pm FAMILY SYSTEMS

8:05-9:00 pm SMALL GROUP TIME

Saturday, April 17, 2021

9:00-9:55 am SMALL GROUPS: FAMILY STORIES

10:05-11:00 am PREMARITAL and MARITAL CARE

BREAK for Lunch

1:00-1:55pm ROLE PLAY

2:05-3:00 pm RURAL and SMALL TOWN MINISTRY

Friday, May 14, 2021

3:00-3:55pm CRISIS SITUATIONS

4:05-5:00 pm ADDICTION and RECOVERY MINISTRY

BREAK for Dinner

7:00-9:00 pm CARE FOR SYSTEMS: SYSTEMIC RACISM

Saturday, May 15, 2021

9:00-10:55 SETTINGS/CONTEXTS: HOMES, HOSPITALS, PRISONS, CARE FACILITIES

BREAK

1:00-1:55 pm GRIEF & LOSS

2:05-3:00 pm INTIMACY IN MINISTRY (a.k.a. “Minding Boundaries”)

GRADES

Students who have previously taken classes in the Course of Study School know that evaluations are done according to the following categories.

Overall Academic Performance	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	N/A
Critical thinking						
Evidence of foundational knowledge and specific vocabulary of discipline						
Research skills						
Preparation for class						
Class participation						
Evidence of theological depth						
Evidence of engagement with different perspectives						
Evidence of mature response to criticism						
Written Communication						
Correct grammar, spelling and sentence structure						
Expansive vocabulary and illustration						
Progression and coherence of argument/logical consistency						
Appropriate citations and bibliography						
Meets standards of assignments						
Relational Skills						
Contributions to learning community						
Interpersonal interaction						
Self-awareness						
Improvement/growth						
Comments:						

The only one of these categories that is “Not Applicable” (N/A) to this course is “Research Skills.” (You will not be expected to do “research” above and beyond the required reading for the course.) I will track your progress as diligently as I can in all the other areas. Please note that constant comments in class do not necessarily amount to “very good” class participation, and offering little does not necessarily mean participation has been “very poor.” As with all pastoral ministry, being timely, relevant, and succinct are important. “Relational skills” are obviously of utmost importance in a course like this one.

ACADEMIC HONOR

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.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Brad Binau is Professor of Pastoral Theology and former Academic Dean at Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, where he is in his twenty-eighth year of teaching. Among the courses he teaches are: "Person in Ministry," "Care of Souls," "Shame and Christian Ministry," "Addiction and Recovery Ministry," "Theological Leadership," "Theology of Sexuality," and "the Seven Deadly Sins." He is an ordained pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American (ELCA). Prior to joining the seminary faculty he served as a parish pastor in La Jolla, California, and before that earned a Ph.D. in Pastoral Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary. His wife, Ann, is a Presbyterian minister serving Broad Street Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio. They have three adult children and 14 year-old Labradoodle named Moxie. This is his eleventh time teaching for the Course of Study at MTSO.

21-DAY RACE EQUITY CHALLENGE TRACKING TOOL

(YOUR NAME)

DAY _____

TITLE OF RESOURCE READ/LISTENED TO/ WATCHED: _____

NOTICE

SOMETHING THIS RESOURCE MADE ME NOTICE:

CONNECT

A **CONNECTION** THIS RESOURCE HELPED ME MAKE:

ENGAGE

SOMETHING I **ENGAGED** DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF THIS RESOURCE:

ACT

AN **ACTION** I TOOK BECAUSE OF INTERACTING WITH THIS RESOURCE:

REFLECT

A **REFLECTION** ON THIS RESOURCE (thoughts, feelings, questions, etc.):