

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

Fall 2020: **Zoom sessions on Nov. 13-14 and Dec. 4-5 (see below)**

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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).

Course Schedule

Nov. 13-14 – Zoom Weekend One

Friday, Nov. 13, Zoom session #1, 1-2 pm (eastern time) and 5-7 pm (eastern time)

Saturday, Nov. 14, Zoom session #2, 12-2 pm (eastern time)

DUE by noon on Nov. 13 (before the Zoom session begins)

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”

Written Assignments (students should upload the assignments on Populi in the Assignments section of the course page before the start of the Zoom session on Nov. 13):

1. Write 2-3 pages 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 Quadrilateral 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?

2. Write the first draft of your credo (3-5 pages). A credo is a written statement of belief describing *your understanding* of essential Christian doctrine. 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:

The Holy Trinity
Creation, Human Nature, and Sin
Jesus Christ – Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection
The Holy Spirit and the Church
Salvation – justification and sanctification
The Future (eschatology) – heaven, hell, the new creation

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

Dec. 4-5 – Zoom Weekend Two

Friday, Dec. 4, Zoom session #3, 1-2 pm (eastern time); 5-7 pm (eastern time)

Saturday, Dec. 5, Zoom session #4, 12-2 pm (eastern time)

DUE by noon on Dec. 4 (before the Zoom session begins)

Reading

Attentive to God: pages 27-29

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

Written Assignments (students should upload the assignments on Populi in the Assignments section of the course page before the start of the Zoom session on Dec. 4):

3. Write a 3-4 pages (#3) 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?

4. The final draft of your Credo (4-6 pages). Due by the start of class on Dec. 4.

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.