

Perkins School of Theology
DM 9380-SEMINAR IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Summer Term 2015
Rev. Gary MacDonald
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July 20-31, 2015
Trinity Theological College
Singapore

CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday, July 20
(9370/9380 Joint Session) 1 - 5 p.m.
Opening Dinner/Orientation 5:30 - 8 p.m.
Tuesday, July 21 - Friday, July 24
8:30-11:30 a.m.
Monday, July 27 – Thursday, July 30
1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Friday, July, 31
. (9370/9380 Joint Session) 8:30 a.m. – Noon

PURPOSE: This seminar teaches the participants to read, reflect upon, and formulate conclusions about practical theology and its relationship to their practice of ministry.

Required Readings

Hansen, David. *The Art of Pastoring*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1994

Keifert, Patrick. *Testing the Spirits*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture* (Preface by James Gufstason. Foreword by Martin Marty). San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001.

Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Veling, Terry A. *Practical Theology: "On Earth as It Is in Heaven."* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis. 2005.

Volf, Miroslav and Bass, Dorothy C. *Practicing Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Preparations for Class

IMPORTANT: Please take care to read the complete syllabus as soon as you receive it. Significant reading, reflection and writing is required prior to the first day of class. It is strongly recommended that students devote themselves fulltime to the work of the class during the dates that the class is in session.

Prior to the start of class:

- Write an autobiographical paper of 1000-1200 words. It should begin with your grandparents, and focus on formative persons in your life, call and ministry. Provide as well for submission a photograph of your church or ministry setting, your family and yourself. Be prepared to make a ten minute autobiographical presentation on the first day of class. **Two copies of the autobiography will be submitted on the first day of class.** (This assignment is common to both 9370 and 9380)
- Write a one-page reflection on what you expect of the DMin course educationally and professionally. After writing this page, read *The Art of Pastoring* by David Hansen and *Practical Theology* by Terry Veling. When you have completed the reading, write a second one- page critique of your expectations based on Hansen and Veling understandings of professional education and practice, noting differences between your expectations and the understanding of education and pastoral ministry put forward by them. This paper will not be graded but will be considered within your participation grading.
- In addition to Hansen and Veling, read the books by Kiefert, Niebuhr, Osmer and Volf/Bass. You will be assigned to write a book review on one of these texts. Assignments for the particular review will be emailed to registered students one month before the start of class on June 20.

Other Class Assignments

1. Theology of Ministry Paper:

Your primary task in this course is to develop a paper that articulates your own theology of ministry. The purpose of the paper is not to report about others, but to take your stand about your own ministry. Four days of the seminar will be devoted to working in small groups on the five major sections of the first draft of your paper. It is not wise to begin writing the paper before the class begins. You will need to arrange to provide copies of your paper for each person in the class and your instructor (This can be done electronically). On **Wednesday, July 22**, a four-page draft statement of your *central theological position* will be due. This will be discussed on the first day of class.

On **Monday, July 27**, your cultural analysis draft is due. Put a one sentence summary of your *central theological position* at the beginning of this draft. In this section of the paper you will be asked to develop a four-page statement that will analyze the cultural context of your ministry from a theological perspective. It would be helpful to discuss briefly (no more than one page) your cultural context of ministry in terms of critical sociological, historical, and/or psychological data about the cultural context in which your ministry takes place. This is not a description of your congregation per se, but of the cultural context in which your congregation does ministry. In the final three pages, examine the cultural data from your theological perspective. What insights emerge as you look at life in your cultural context from your theological perspective? Do not at this time offer solutions to any problems identified.

On **Wednesday, July 29**, your drafts for sections on the mission of the church and the ministry of the church are due. Remember to include a one sentence statement of your central theological position at the beginning of this paper. Write a three-page section on your understanding of the mission of the church and a three- page section on your understanding of ministry of all the people of God. These two sections should spell out the implications of your two previous sections for these issues. If, for example, you take the category of "hope" or "love" as central to your theological position, then these two sections would spell out the marks of the church and ministry in terms of hope or love. Finally, the focus on the church should spell out three or four distinguishing marks of the church that refer to the essence of its being. The ministry section deals with ministry as a generic issue in that what you write here has to be applicable to laity and the ministry they do in their daily life as well as what clergy do. The issues of ordained ministry and ministerial leadership will be dealt with in the final section of the paper.

On **Friday, July 31**, your draft for the tasks of ministry section is due. Remember to include a one sentence statement of your central theological position at the beginning of this paper. Select three major responsibilities of ministry (one from either preaching/worship or pastoral care, one from either social action or evangelism, and one from either education or administration.) Spell out one or two specific ways that previous four sections of your “Theology of Ministry” paper affect how you see the purpose of this task, along with one or two practical things you would do to fulfill that purpose. This should be done in five to six pages. This section is not a place to give general suggestions on how to do these tasks. The purpose of this section is to examine what to do and how to do the tasks in the light of the central theological position of your ministry. You are identifying the practical consequences of your position. For example, if your theology is based on hope, then in administration you may need to deal with attitudes toward shaping the future of the church, its ministry, and the community where it is operative.

A final draft of your paper that takes account of the critique from your colleagues and seminar leaders, and your own further reflection, is due no later than **Monday, August 17**. These may be emailed to the instructor at gmacdona@smu.edu, who will confirm successful receipt of the paper. Please put “9380 FINAL PAPER” in the subject line of the email.

2. Critical Review

Each student will prepare a critical review of one of the assigned texts and will lead a small group in discussion of the text and its themes during the course. Texts will be assigned prior to the start of class. In your review focus on issues for the development of a practical theology in general and for one’s track in particular. This critical analysis should be from four to five pages. You should identify three themes, issues, or central concerns that must be addressed by any practical theology, and examine your reading assignment for the day to see how the author(s) would respond to the concerns you are raising. Your presentation should end with two questions that will serve as the springboard for the discussion by the group on the critical issues you have raised that will apply to your theology of ministry paper. Your role is *not* to report what the authors have said since all will have read the material. Rather you should focus on a critical analysis for what you have read as it relates to ministry. Persons should bring enough copies of their paper to share with his or her small group and to submit for grading. The first of these papers will be due on **Tuesday, July 21**, so be sure you have received the specific assignment

from the office of Advanced Ministerial Studies in time to prepare. These assignments will be emailed from the instructor to enrolled students by Friday, June 27.

3. *Case Study*

Prepare a case study from your setting or practice of ministry. The purpose of the case studies is to engage in theological reflection on the practice of ministry. Please **do not** use a pastoral care or counseling case. Write your case study about a church meeting, an issue of ministry in a small group, or even a one-to-one session that is dealing with an issue of the church's ministry. It can deal with any age level or any issue from teaching the Bible to managing the church facility. It can be from an outreach ministry or a maintenance ministry in the local church. Include in your study any implications it has for your DMin track. Your six page case study should do the following: 1) give the critical background information, 2) briefly describe the important parts of the event, 3) what biblical/theological assumptions were present 4) what were the most important cultural influences at work in this situation 5) describe the understanding of the church and ministry that informed the participants, 6) what options did those involved see that they had to deal with the matter at hand, 7) given your theology of ministry what options do you see for the situation, 8) give one other option that one of the authors of the books you have read for this course might propose, and 9) what issue would you want the group to address in this situation to help you. Case studies will be presented beginning on **Friday, July 24**. Be prepared to bring enough copies to both submit for grading and for your small group.

Schedule

Monday, July 20

Course overview

Introductions/autobiographies

Review of Assignments

Discussion of Hansen and Veling

Tuesday, July 21

Discussion of Osmer

Wednesday, July 22

Part I (Theology) papers due

Thursday, July 23

Discussion of Niebuhr

Friday, July 24

Case Studies

Monday, July 27

Part II (Culture) papers due

Tuesday, July 28

Discussion of Keifert

Wednesday, July 29

Part III and IV (Church and Ministry) papers due

Thursday, July 30

Discussion of Volf/Bass

Friday, July 31

Part V (Practical Tasks) paper due

Grading

Grading in this course is based on the assumption that graduate level work is expected. Therefore, above average grades of B- or higher are expected in the course and program. Grades of A- or higher are considered to be exceptionally superior work.

The grading for the course is as follows:

50% - Theology of Ministry Paper

30% - Book Review, Case Study

20% - Class Participation/Autobiography

Minority Concerns and Ministry Courses in the Perkins Curriculum

In 1975 the Perkins Senate passed resolutions which bear on the relation of the Perkins curriculum to this school's common concern for the status of ethnic minority groups and of women both in education for ministry and in the ministry itself. The following statement summarizes these resolutions with respect to courses in the area of Ministry.

1. Instructors and students alike are urged to use inclusive language, images and metaphors which will give full and positive value to both the past contributions and the future prospects of ethnic minorities and women in the church and in society at large.

2. Instructors and students alike are urged to give sensitive consideration to the role of images from a predominantly white and male culture in shaping both the language and concepts of Christian theology and the models and methods of Christian ministry that are widely current today.

3. Instructors are urged to make every effort to provide—in the syllabi, assignments and formats of their courses—opportunities for women students and students from ethnic minority groups (1) to study the functions of ministry with particular reference to their own status or tradition in the life of the church, (2) to practice the functions of ministry (when practice is an element in a course) in settings which reflect or, if possible, arise from their own status or tradition in the life of the church, (3) to receive evaluation of their practice of the functions of ministry from persons who are not only knowledgeable about and skilled in those functions, but also share their special status or tradition in the life of the church, and (4) to observe the practice of persons who, as women or as members of ethnic minority groups, provide models of effective ministry which are immediately relevant to the special status or tradition of women or members of ethnic minority groups in the church.

4. Instructors are urged to make every effort to provide—in the syllabi, assignments and formats of their courses—opportunities for all students to become acquainted with the special problems and conditions that affect women and ethnic minority groups in human society and in the life of the church, with special attention to the ways in which these problems and conditions may affect the practice of ministry.

Policy Statements

The *Student Handbook* for Perkins School of Theology includes three appendices with statements on Sexual Harassment, Academic Responsibility, and Grade Appeals. All students should be familiar with these statements and should expect that they will be honored in this course.

Revised 1 June 15