

**COS 124: "TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP"
PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
REGIONAL COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL
PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS
FALL 2026**



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HIGHER EDUCATION & MINISTRY
General Board of Higher Education and Ministry
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



SMU | PERKINS SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to COS-124 “Transformative Leadership!” This is a first-year course in the Pastoral Identity Curriculum of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry’s Course of Study School (GBHEM). The course is intended to form the student’s identity as both a pastoral leader and change agent in congregations, The United Methodist Church, and the world. To accomplish this goal, students will explore and seek to excavate answers to questions, including what leadership is. How does one identify leadership? Does leadership have criteria? Should such criteria be universal? Are leaders born or bred? What makes one a transformative leader? Can one be considered transformative without being a leader, and vice versa?

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and understand the attributes of good leaders, biblically and theologically.
2. Evaluate and strengthen their own identities and skills as pastoral leaders.
3. Explain and reflect on the nature of change in the local congregation and broader society.
4. Implement visioning, strategizing, and planning processes in their ministry settings.
5. Develop one’s working definition of transformative leadership.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

The GBHEM requires that all Pre-Class Assignments be submitted via Canvas by **October 30, 2026, and must be completed by this date. Failure to complete the Pre-Class Assignments will result in the student receiving a grade of No Credit (NC) for the course.** Student’s work must be typed in 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with page numbers in the bottom left corner, and a header, including the student’s first and last name, on each page. Students are expected to observe The Chicago Manual of Style for citations.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Ninth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) Ninth Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). ISBN: 978-0226494425

Other resources include Purdue Online Writing Lab and The Chicago Manual of Style *Online*.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #1 (15%)

Students will write an essay not to exceed three (3) typewritten pages answering each of the following questions. What is leadership? How does one identify leadership? What are the criteria for defining leadership? Should such criteria be universal? Are leaders born or bred? What makes one a transformative leader? Can one be considered transformative without being a leader, and vice versa? In responding to these questions, students must identify one (1) non-Biblical person (living or deceased) they believe fits the archetype of a transformative leader.

PRE-CLASS ASSIGNMENT #2 (15%)

Students will write one (1) book review (700 to 800 words in length) on a text of the student's choice from the **RECOMMENDED TEXTS** listed below. A book review typically includes the following elements: 1) a summary of the book's content and author's primary argument(s); 2) a critical evaluation of the book's content and argument; and 3) an indication of what audience or what kind of reader might find the book useful. Critically evaluating a book does not mean one dislikes the work. It can be positive. Well-written reviews always offer an assessment of the book's contribution or value in a particular field of study and usually offer suggestions for improvement.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bruce Birch and Lewis Parks, *Ducking Spears, Dancing Madly: A Biblical Model of Church Leadership* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004). ISBN: 978-0687092857

Brandon O'Brien and Jim Belcher, *The Strategically Small Church: Intimate, Nimble, Authentic, and Effective* (Grand Rapids: Bethany House Publishers, 2010). ISBN: 978-0764207839

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (these titles may be found on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Goodreads, SMU Libraries, or the Interlibrary Loan System)

Tod E. Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016). ISBN: 978-0369365705

Leslie Copeland, *24/7 Embodying Christ-like Leadership* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2022). ISBN: 978-0817018375

Maxie D. Dunnman, *Christian Leadership: Speaking to God for the People, Speaking to the People for God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2019). ISBN: 9781501883118

Norma Cook Everist, *Transforming Leadership: New Vision for a Church in Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008). ISBN: 978-0800620486

Walter E. Fluker, *Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009). ISBN: 978-0800663490

Robert M. Franklin, Jr., *Moral Leadership: Integrity, Courage, Imagination* (New York: Orbis Books, 2020). ISBN: 978-1626983588

Tim Gregory, *Transformational Pastoral Leadership: Ushering in Lasting Growth and Maturity* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023). ISBN: 978-3031274879

Roger Heuser, *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving Others* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-1426711398

Knud Jørgensen, *Equipping for Service: Christian Leadership in Church and Society* (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2011). ISBN: 978-1506475660

Phillip V. Lewis, *Transformational Leadership: A New Model for Total Church Involvement* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996). ISBN: 978-0805412390

Chloe Lynch, *Ecclesiastical Leadership as Friendship* (New York: Routledge, 2019). ISBN: 978-0367786830

Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003). ISBN: 978-0801091438

Elizabeth Gillan Muir, *A Women's History of the Christian Church: Two Thousand Years of Female Leadership* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019). ISBN: 978-1487593841

Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership in the Future* (New York: Crossroads, 1989). ISBN: 978-0824512590

Annmarie Sanders, ed. *Transformational Leadership: Conversations with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015). ISBN: 978-1626981386

John Stott. *Problems of Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005). ISBN: 978-1610458603

J. Lee Whittington, *Biblical Perspectives on Leadership and Organizations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). ISBN: 978-1-137-47803-0

Jerry C. Wofford, *Transforming Christian Leadership: 10 Exemplary Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999). ISBN: 978-0801090936

GRADING POLICY

Grades are awarded based on the following general guidelines. The Instructor of Record has discretion to decide the criteria for evaluation of work to assign grades for student work in their course.

Grading Scale

A	A -	B +	B	B -	C +	C	C -	D +	D	D -	F
100-93%	92-90%	89-87%	86-83%	82-80%	79-77%	76-73%	72-70%	69-67%	66-63%	62-60%	59-50%

- I Incomplete (grade will change to F by September 14 if work remains incomplete)
- NC No credit received
- W Withdrew
- X No grade received in the Course of Study office

Grading Rubric

Criteria	Ratings					Pts
Timeliness	30 pts Student timely submitted work.	15 pts Student submitted 1 day late.	5 pts Student submitted 2 days late.	0 pts Student receives a 0 after 3 days.		30
Quality	50 pts Exemplary A superior performance. Shows conceptual mastery & makes contributions.	40 pts Accomplished Above average performance. A few flaws, but overall has great application of the materials.	30 pts Developing A generally satisfactory, intellectually adequate performance.	20 pts Beginning A barely satisfactory performance. Contributes little & lacks conceptual a clarity.	0 pts Insufficient Not quality work.	50
Syntax	20 pts Grammatically & technically sound.	10 pts A few significant flaws	5 pts Several significant flaws	0 pts Unacceptable; not quality work.		20
Total Points: 100						