

Perkins School of Theology
DM 9380-SEMINAR IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

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June 16: 9-Noon; 1:30-4:30p
with DM 9370
June 17-26
T-F; M-F: 1:30-4:30p
Location: 222 Prothro

PURPOSE: This seminar is designed to enable the participants to read, reflect upon, and formulate conclusions concerning the field of practical theology and its relationship to one's practice of ministry.

Required Readings

- Ammerman, Nancy T., et al, eds. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville. Abingdon. 1998.
- Branson, Mark Lau and Martínez, Juan F. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011.
- Galindo, Isrel. *The Hidden Lives of Congregations: Understanding Church Dynamics*. Herndon, Va. Alban Institute. 2004.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: HarperOne. 2001.
- Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Tyra, Gary. *A Missional Orthodoxy: Theology and Ministry in a Post-Christian Context*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.
- Volf, Miroslav and Bass, Dorothy C. *Practicing Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.

Preparations for Class

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.

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. You may include photographs or use projection. Your presentation should be no longer than ten minutes. Ten minutes should be the maximum length of your presentation. **Two copies of the autobiography should be submitted on the first day of class.** It will not be graded but will contribute to your participation grade. If your presentation to the class is 11 minutes long, it is too long. (Common with 9370).

- Read parts 1 & 2 (chapters 1-7) of *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* by Donald Schön. This book is included to assist the student in reframing the style of learning/education used not only for this course but also as a basis for the D. Min program. **A two part assignment:** 1) *Prior to your reading Schön*, write a one-page reflection on what you expect of the D.Min process educationally and professionally. 2.) To indicate your understanding of the book/theory write a second page with a critique of your expectations utilizing Schön's theory of education. **DUE: First day of the course** **Two copies of the reflection should be submitted on the first day of class.** It will not be graded but will contribute to your participation grade. (Common with 9370)

Theology of Ministry Paper:

The primary task of 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 bring copies of your paper for each person in your small group.

Class Assignments:

Due on **Thursday, June 19** is a four-page draft statement of your central theological position. This is the core position that shapes your vocation and ministry. At the top of the paper, state your central position in no more than 50 words; fewer would be better. (On each subsequent section draft, please indicate your central theological position with your brief statement at the top of the first page.) Comments will be made on this paper and it will be returned to you by Monday, June 23.

Due on **Tuesday, June 24** is your cultural analysis 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 the perspective of your theological center. It would be helpful to look briefly (no more than one page) at 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 but 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 challenges identified.

Due on **Thursday, June 26** are your drafts for sections on the mission of the church and the ministry of the church. 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 you take the category of "hope" or "love" as your theological center, 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 will be dealt with in the final section of the paper.

Due on **Friday, June 26**, is your draft for the tasks of ministry section. 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, and spell out one or two specific consequences of the previous four sections for how you would see the purpose of this task along with one or two practical things you would do to fulfill that purpose. Include in your analysis the role of ordained and lay leadership. 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 theological center 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 stands, and determining what you must do today to bring that future into being.

In the progress of the course, students may submit an additional section draft to the instructor for comment, beyond the classroom discussion.

A final draft of your paper that takes account of the critique from your colleagues and seminar leader, and your own further reflection, is due no later than **5 p.m. Central Time on Monday, July 8**. These may be emailed to the instructor at gmacdona@smu.edu with the subject line reading "9380 Theology of Ministry Paper."

Other Class Assignments:

- 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 and small groups will be assigned prior to the start of class. For the review, identify the critical issues related to the themes that arise from the reading for the day in order to focus on these thematic 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. Persons should be prepared to provide electronic copies to share with the class the evening prior to the presentation and to provide a hardcopy to the instructor for grading. The first of these papers will be due on **Tuesday, June 17**, 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 to you by May 15 for students registered for the class.

- Prepare a case study from your setting or practice of ministry, different from your “ministry event” in DM 9370. The purpose of these case studies is to engage in theological reflection on the practice of ministry. Please **do not** use a pastoral care or counseling case. Deal with a 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. Work to include implications for your DMin track within the case. Your six page write-up 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 **Wednesday, June 18**. Be prepared to provide electronic copies and a hardcopy for grading.

Class Schedule

Monday, June 16

(9-noon, 1:30-4:30 pm. Meeting with 9370)

Course overview

Introductions/autobiographies

Explanation of “Theology of Ministry” assignment

Discussion of Osmer’s *Practical Theology*

Tuesday, June 17

1:30-4:30 p.m.

Discussion of Tyra and Volf/Bass

Wednesday, June 18

1:30-4:30 p.m.

Case Studies I

Thursday, June 19

1:30-4:30 p.m.

Part I (Theology) papers due

Friday, June 20
1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Discussion of Branson/Niebuhr

Monday, June 23
1:30-4:30 p.m.
Case Studies II

Tuesday, June 24
1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Part II (Culture) papers due

Wednesday, June 25
1:30-4:30 p.m.
Discussion of Galindo/Ammerman

Thursday, June 26
1:30-4:30 p.m.
Part III and IV (Church and Ministry) papers due

Friday, June 26
1:30-4:30 p.m.
Part V (Practical Tasks) paper due
Review and Evaluation

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:

- 20% - Class Participation (including small group leadership, first-day assignments and case-studies)
- 20% - Book Review
- 60% - Theology of Ministry Paper

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.