

Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study  
**CS-524 Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry**  
October 16-17 and November 6-7, 2015

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### **Course Description**

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.

### **Goals**

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.

### **Required Texts**

Byassee, Jason. *Trinity: The God We Don't Know*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015.

Cahalan, Kathleen. *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.

Willimon, William H. *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.

Wood, Charles M. and Ellen Blue. *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008.

### **Assignments**

1. Due October 16 at the beginning of class:
  - a. Read Willimon, *Pastor*. Write a 4-page response to the following questions:
    - i. Chapters 2-13 each present a different model for pastoral ministry. Which model is most important to you? Why? How is that reflected in your own ministry (e.g., how you spend your time, an event you've planned or led, etc.)? What does Willimon have to say about this model that you find helpful (be specific; cite page numbers)? What does he say that challenges the importance you place on this model (again, be specific)?
    - ii. Of all the models Willimon discusses, including those in chapter 2, which do you think your congregation(s) values the most? What about their behavior or speech tells you so? Be specific with your examples. How

- have the expectations of your congregation(s) affected your ministry as a pastor?
- b. Read Byassee, *Trinity*. In about 3 pages, complete the following:
    - i. In two or three good paragraphs, explain what Byassee means by the subtitle of his book (“The God we don’t know”).
    - ii. Choose and write a one-paragraph response to one discussion question from the Introduction and one discussion question from each chapter (for a total of 4 questions). Be sure to identify which question you are answering in each paragraph.
  - c. Using an online generator such as [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) or [www.worditout.com](http://www.worditout.com) (or search for “word cloud generator”), create and submit a single word cloud based on your 10 most recent sermons. Copy and paste the text of all 10 sermons into a single word cloud generator (don’t do a separate word cloud for each sermon). Generate the word cloud, save it, and print it to submit.
    - i. If you normally only use outlines for your sermons, you may copy your outlines into the generator instead.
  - d. Examine your word cloud and write a 2-page response, considering the following questions: Which words are the largest? Which are the smallest? The larger the word, the more frequently it appears in your sermons/outlines. What surprises do you find in your word cloud? Were there words you expected to be there that were absent or smaller than you expected? What does your word cloud suggest about your recent preaching?
2. Due November 6 at the beginning of class:
- a. Read Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry* chapters 2, 3, 5, and 6.
  - b. Develop and type up an outline of a 4-week sermon series on Christian ministry for your congregation. Do not write the actual sermons. Do the following instead. i-v can be listed in an outline or bullet-point format. vi must be completed in paragraph format.
    - i. Decide on when in the year you would preach the series.
    - ii. Decide on which Scripture passages you would use. You may select your own or use the lectionary readings, but you must read a passage from both the Old Testament and the New Testament each week.
    - iii. Create an overall title for the series and titles for each week.
    - iv. Decide on the major overall themes for the series as well as major themes for each week.
    - v. Write a function statement of 1-2 sentences that explains what you hope to accomplish by preaching the series. For example: The purpose of this sermon series is to help my congregation understand the relationship between our belief in the Trinity and our practice of ministry.
    - vi. Write an explanation of your sermon series. Your explanation should be 5 pages. Tell why you selected the time of year. Briefly explain your understanding of the relationship of the selected Scripture passages to your overall themes and the themes for each week. Then discuss the themes you decided on: why do you want to highlight these ideas? What motivates your function statement (e.g., something you’ve learned; an issue in your congregation)? How do these themes support your function statement?

- Draw on lectures, class discussions, and the readings (Willimon, Byassee, and Cahalan; be specific: use quotations and/or cite page numbers) to support your answers to these questions.
3. Due at noon on November 13 by email to the professor:
    - a. Write a 2-3 page reflection paper on your goals for lifelong theological reflection, reading, and growth.
      - i. You should have 3 goals: a 1-year goal, a 3-year goal, and a 5-year goal.
      - ii. Your goals may be educational (For example: I will read three books on the Trinity) or practical (For example: I will teach a Sunday School class on Christian vocation). You must have at least one of each.
      - iii. Each goal should be specific: Which books will you read? What courses will you take? What topics will you preach or teach? What events will you plan?
      - iv. For each goal, write an explanation for why you set that goal. Was there something in the course material that inspired or challenged you? Is it an area you struggle with? Or something that you're especially passionate about?
      - v. Also, for each goal, explain briefly how you will be held accountable to that goal. Will you tell your SPRC, district superintendent, or mentor? Will you set specific dates and reminders on your calendar? Do you have a clergy support group or ministerium that can help you?
  4. All written assignments should be typed in double-spaced paragraphs using 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins.

#### **Assessment**

- Pre-course assignment: 40%
- Sermon series outline: 30%
- Reflection paper: 20%
- Class participation: 10%

Late assignments will lose one letter grade in value for each day late.