

Wesley Theological Seminary

Course of Study

Upper New York Satellite

January 15, 2021 to February 27, 2021 (Online)

Course: CS-524 Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Faculty: Rev. Dr. Aaron M. Bouwens

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Course Goals

This course is designed to provide an opportunity for local pastors to strengthen their ability to engage in theological reflection, and to help them think theological about the wide range of endeavors part of pastoral ministry. Further, students will reflect how theology informs and shapes life both inside and outside the community of faith.

Course Objectives

The following objectives are intended to help students attain these goals:

- To experience a sustained discussion of basic theological perspectives
- To learn how to think theologically about the practices of day-to-day ministry
- To practice the art of theological reflection by being in conversation with colleagues
- To gain further understanding of the relationship of theological reflection and a life of faith.

It is expected that at the end of the course students will have developed a deeper understanding of theological reflection and the impact on the practice of ministry. Students will have refined their skill in theological reflection to enable them to clarify the theology which governs their ministry endeavors.

Required Texts:

Will Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry (Revised Edition)*

Kathleen Cahalan, *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*

Charles Wood and Ellen Blue, *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry*

Recommended Texts:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*

Kenneth L. Carder and Lacey C. Warner, *Grace to Lead: Practicing Leadership in the Wesleyan Tradition. (Revised Edition)*

Zoom Schedule:

Date	Content/Purpose	Attendance Expectation
January 15, 2021 7pm-9pm	Expectations/content lecture and conversation	All students need to be in attendance
January 16, 2021 10am-noon	The practice of Theological reflection	All students need to be in attendance.
January 20, 2021 7pm-8pm	Theological reflection practice	Students need to attend three of the 6
January 27, 2021 7pm-8pm	Theological reflection practice	Students need to attend three of the 6
February 3, 2021 7pm-8pm	Theological reflection practice	Students need to attend three of the 6
February 10, 2021 7pm-8pm	Theological reflection practice	Students need to attend three of the 6
February 18, 2021 7pm-8pm	Theological reflection practice	Students need to attend three of the 6
February 25, 2021 7pm-8pm	Theological reflection practice	Students need to attend three of the 6
February 26, 2021 7pm-9pm	Wesleyan theological framework	All students need to be in attendance
February 27, 2021 10am-noon	Concluding matters	All students need to be in attendance

Written Assignments:

Written Assignment 1 (10% of grade)

After reading Willimon's *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* give deeper attention to chapters 2, 12, 14 and one of your choice. For **each** of the four chapters write a 1-2 page reflection sharing the following:

1. How did the text resonate with your understanding?
2. Where did the text cause dissonance with your understanding?
3. How does the text impact the way you practice ministry in your current setting?

Post to Blackboard no later than **midnight January 9, 2021.**

Written Assignment 2 (10% of grade)

After reading Cahalan's *Introducing The Practice of Ministry*, give deeper attention to chapters 1, 5, 7, and one of your choice. For **each** of the four chapters write a 1-2 page reflection sharing the following:

1. How did the text resonate with your understanding?
2. Where did the text cause dissonance with your understanding?
3. How does the text impact the way you practice ministry in your current setting?

Post to Blackboard no later than **midnight January 16, 2021.**

Written Assignment 3 (15% of Grade)

Part 1:

After reading Wood and Blue's *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry*, write a 3-5 page reflection based on Part 1 of the book. Be sure to articulate how you are growing your capacity to engage in theological reflection.

Part 2:

Select one of the case studies from Part two of Wood and Blue. Write a **one page** theological reflection in response to the case study.

Post both parts in one document to Blackboard no later than **midnight January 30, 2021**.

Written Assignment 4 (20% of Grade)

Part 1:

Write a case study for theological reflection. The case should be a real situation in ministry—preferably one in which you, yourself, are currently or recently engaged. The actual identities of the individuals involved in the case, however, should be disguised. The case should present a clear point of theological reflection whereas Christian doctrine and practice inform a deeper conversation of theology and the practice of ministry. The case study should be no more than 4 pages.

Part 2:

Write a 4-6 page theological reflection exploring the theological aspects of the case study from part 1. Be sure to show evidence of engagement with the readings for the course, as well as the lectures, and other interactions such as Zoom theological reflections and online forums.

Post both parts in one document to Blackboard no later than **midnight February 27, 2021**.

All papers will be evaluated by the standards of the assignment, clarity of writing, accuracy, consistency, the ability to make a coherent argument, and fidelity to proper academic standards, including accurate quotation and citation of sources. Papers must include complete references. Proper citation of all sources is expected. Please submit all papers double spaced in Times New Roman, 12 point font, with 1 inch margins. Papers more than 1 page shorter or longer than the page requirements will be marked down accordingly.

Papers are due at the time and date posted with each assignment. If there is a ministry situation causing a challenge to the completion of the assignment contact Dr. Bouwens right away to discuss the best way to move forward. Late papers will be reduced by 10% grade every 5 days late. Unless worked out with Dr. Bouwens, no papers will be accepted after March 13, 2021.

Online Forums

An important part of an online learning community is discussion through forums. There will be regular questions posted to Blackboard for discussion. Students are expected to engage in dialogue with each other through the forums. Additionally, there may be videos posted for viewing and reflection. Participation with the online forums makes up **10% of your grade**.

Zoom Theological Reflection (30% of Grade)

A class about theological reflection cannot be theory alone. Daily we face situations that invite us to theological reflection. Often, we need practice to develop the pattern and brain muscles of theological reflection. To that end, each week there will be a Zoom meeting to engage in the practice of theological reflection. During this time it is expected students will offer situations for theological reflection from the past week of ministry. The sessions will be from 7pm-8pm on the following days; **January 20, January 27, February 3, February 10, February 18, February 25**. Students are expected to be ***present for 3 of the sessions***. It is not required to be at all 6 sessions, though students are welcome at as many as they would like to attend.

Grading Rubric

Assignment	% of Grade
Willimon paper	10
Cahalan paper	10
Wood and Blue Paper	15
Case Study and Reflection	20
Zoom Theological Reflection Practice	30 (10% each)
Participation with online forums	10
Participation as a whole	5

Additional Information

- All written work shall be submitted via Blackboard. You should have received a login to the Wesley system either with your confirmation packet if this is your first time to Wesley, or in previous mailings. If you do not know your log on, please contact Sara Sheppard. ssheppard@wesleyseminary.edu
- Please be sure to include the date, your name on each paper you submit via Blackboard.
- Be aware of the Seminary policy on plagiarism. If you do not know what plagiarism is, please go to the website and find the policy in the student handbook. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade.
- If you need help with writing, you can contact the Writing Center at Wesley. Their contact information is 202-885-8671. The staff there is happy to assist you with writing inquiries, but it is not their job to write the paper for you.