

COS 524 Spring Term, 2021

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: PRACTICE OF MINISTRY

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION—David Erenrich

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is the capstone to the student's basic course of study work. Its focus is on the integration of biblical, theological, and practical aspects of ministry.

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Articulate a Biblical and theological understanding of the various aspects of the practice of ministry as well as a Trinitarian theology of the practice of ministry.
2. State clearly the nature and mission of the Church and its relation to the practice of ministry.
3. Demonstrate the ability to reflect theologically in the various roles and tasks of ministry.
4. Develop a plan for lifelong theological reading, reflection, and growth in ministry.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- Will Willimon: *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*
- Kathleen Cahalan: *Introducing the Practice of Ministry*
- Charles Wood and Ellen Blue: *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry*

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS (Optional and helpful reading but not required)

- Lacey Warner and Ken Carder: *The Grace to Lead*
- Bob Goff: *Everybody Always: Becoming Love in a World of Setbacks and Difficult People*

COURSE STRUCTURE:

Live Zoom Video Conferencing on the following dates and times. **MARK THEM DOWN ON YOUR CALENDARS NOW.**

- Saturday, March 20 9:00-11:00 AM
- Saturday, April 10 9:00-11:00 AM
- Saturday, April 24 9:00-11:00 AM and 1:00-3:00 PM
- Saturday, May 8 9:00-11:00 AM

- Zoom sessions will include lectures, open discussions, small groups, and reports of students reflections on topics from readings and work.
- You will be asked to “pair” with another student to discuss a subject from either readings, areas of reflection, or one of our “online” class sessions. This will be explained and occur three times throughout the duration of the Course.
- There will also be a 30-minute Skype discussion with the instructor and each student at various times throughout the Course time frame.
- **On YouTube selections make note: right click on the link and then left click on the “Open Hyperlink”**

COURSE READINGS, PREPARATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Readings for March 20, 2021

1. Read Willimon’s Chapters 1-2-3-4-5
2. Read Cahalan’s Chapters 1-2-3
3. Watch YouTube: Willimon on the “Messiness of Ministry”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCpJAYDR-u4>

NOTE: Continue to read Willimon as we will be working with his book in the next several sessions. It will be to your advantage to continue reading and highlighting as you are able.

Written Assignments for March 20 From the readings; Send by E-mail attachment by March 15. 1 to 1 ½ pages for each question—

1. What does **Willimon** mean that ministry is an act of God and an act of the Church? Be specific and include whether you agree/disagree and your reasons.
2. **Willimon** indicates that ministry is “difficult” today. What is he saying and can you elaborate from your own ministry?
3. **Willimon** sets forth several “assumed” images of pastors in today’s culture and then suggests a metaphor for ministry today. What is he suggesting and why is he setting forth this metaphor? Where do you see corrections in your understanding of the work of your ministry?
4. **Cahalan** in chapter one sets forth (identifies) “markers” of discipleship from her understanding of the New Testament. These are marks of all disciples who wish to follow and live in and witness to Christ. Pick two that you believe you have been especially attentive to your walk as a disciple, explain how and in what ways as you understand Cahalan’s description. Now pick one that you believe you need to

be more attentive to in your walk as a disciple and explain in what ways you are challenged in this “marker.”

5. **Cahalan** sets forth in chapter two that Paul sees two kinds of Charisms for the Christian life and that they are “fundamentally gifts for service.” What does this mean as you read/reflect on chapter two.
6. **Cahalan indicates** that Paul distinguishes “two kinds of grace gifts. The first are universal gifts that all Christians receive...” and also that each “person is capable of different kinds of service and he calls this second type of gift ‘charism...’” and should be lived out in service. What does she mean by this and in what ways should this be “lived out in service?”

READINGS FOR April 10, 2020 SESSION

1. Read Willimon: Chapters 6-7-8-9-10
2. Read Cahalan: Chapters 4-5-6-7
3. Watch YouTube by Kent Millard, “whoami”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ne5hh_x4IRE&list=PLBgQQ8eFwsj7bVFCvz2_yzSB3zFNeU0Bf&index=1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4qXBsB8DxQ&list=PLBgQQ8eFwsj7bVFCvz2_yzSB3zFNeU0Bf&index=2

Written Assignment: (Approximately 3 pages each)

Choose 2 of the areas/tasks of ministry from this session’s reading of Willimon.

Express what is essential in Willimon’s concerns and challenges in these “tasks” of ministry. **Do you** agree, disagree and why? **What did you learn (AND where are you being challenged)** about how you carry out these tasks in ministry. **NOTE:** it will be helpful for you to cross reference and take special note of the readings in Cahalan.

Have your completed written assignment available for our Zoom session AND then you will be asked to e-mail it to me later that day.

READINGS FOR April 24, 9:00 AM and the 1:00 PM Sessions

1. Read Willimon: Chapters 11-12
2. Read Wood and Blue
3. Watch YouTube Willimon, “God on the Prowl”

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=William+Willimon+on+video&view=detail&mid=29AB5E336E2E0D0B81F429AB5E336E2E0D0B81F4&FORM=VIRE>

Wood and Blue indicate in chapter five that “Practical theology is that aspect of theological inquiry that attends particularly to the question of how the Christian witness is best realized in a given context.” They also further share that key questions should always be asked in situations...” Further, that we have forgotten how to pay attention to God in the everyday matters and situations that arise in life and ministry.

Pay particular attention to what Wood and Blue are conveying about why and what we should be asking theologically in situations—

Pick two (2) of the case situations from Wood and Blue to ask the theological questions: What is going on in this situation? How is God involved in what is going on? What is a response that reflects Kingdom values of Jesus’ mission?

Prepare a written response (2-3pages) to the above situations and have them ready and **be prepared to share** during the April 24th session.

READINGS FOR May 8, 2020

1. Willimon: Chapters 13-14
2. Cahalan: Chapters 6-7
3. Watch YouTube of Weems on Leadership: a Few Lessons Learned
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnwrGF3Djj0>

ASSGINMENT

(Begin to develop this for an initial presentation on May 8th Zoom session.) Then you and your partner will have the following week to complete and send it in by E Mail attachment.

Partner pairing—you and your partner will pick two (2) case situations (one from each of your respective ministries) to discuss and question in the light of our work in this class, as well as paying particular attention to the key theological questions we are to ask. Then develop a theological understanding and a response and/or follow up.

You will need time with each other to 1) talk through the situations, raising questions; 2) think through the key theological issues/questions that need to be asked in the situation; and 3) and then move to an informed and possible response/follow up.

More information will be given to this assignment during our Zoom sessions.

Each student will be responsible for her (his) situation. Length to be 4-5 pages, and will be due by E-mail attachment by May 18th.