

COS 524 Spring Term, 2022

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: PRACTICE OF MINISTRY

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION—

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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 19 9:00-11:00 AM
- Saturday, April 9 9:00-11:00 AM
- Saturday, April 23 9:00-11:00 AM and 1:00-3:00 PM
- Saturday, May 14 9:00-11:00 AM

- Students will be asked to join a Facebook Discussion Board to share reflections around a particular topic each week.
- Written work for assignments will be due by email on or before dates indicated for each Zoom session.
- You will also be asked to “pair” with another student to discuss a subject from a situation in your present ministry and to help each other look at how that situation can be approached in one or more functions/roles of ministry as per our readings. This will be explained ahead of time in the Course.
- There may also be a 30-minute Skype discussion with each student and the instructor at various times throughout the Course time frame (depending on the number in the class).

COURSE READINGS, PREPARATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Zoom Session #1

Readings for March 19, 2022

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

Written Assignments from the readings; Send by E-mail in a single file attachment by or on March 17th. 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 here? Elaborate/give examples you 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 and witness to Christ. Pick two that you believe you have been especially attentive to in your walk as a disciple, explain how and in what ways as you understand Chalan’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.” Take up to 2 pages as need for this question.

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.

Zoom Session #2

READINGS FOR April 9, 2022 SESSION

1. Read Willimon: Chapters 6-7-8-9-10
2. Read Cahalan: Chapters 4-5-6-7
3. Watch YouTube by Kent Millard
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4qXBsB8DxQ&list=PLBgQQ8eFwsj7bVFCvz2_yzSB3zFNeU0Bf&index=2
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnwrGF3Djj0>

Written Assignments: (Approximately 3-4 pages each)

Choose 2 of the areas/tasks of ministry from the readings 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? 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 for reference and discussion AND then you will be asked to e-mail it to me later that day.

Zoom Session #3 and #4

READINGS FOR April 23, 9:00 AM and the 1:00 PM Sessions

1. Read Willimon: Chapters 11-12
2. Read Wood and Blue
3. Watch YouTube by Lovett Weems
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnwrGF3Djj0>

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 any given context.” They state 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(s)? Or put another way—What functions/tasks of ministry would you employ that reflects the Kingdom values of Jesus' mission in this situation?

Written responses (2-3 pages) for each of the above situations, E-mail those to me by/on April 22nd and be ready to share during the April 23rd session.

Zoom Session #5

READINGS FOR May 14th

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>

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

(Begin to develop this for initial presentation on May 8th. Then you and your partner will have the following week to confer; for you to complete and send it in by E Mail by May 18th (4-5 pages)

Partner pairing—you and your partner will pick a case situation (***one from each of your respective ministries***) to discuss, question in the light of your readings and our work in this class; paying attention to the key theological questions we are to ask as well as the various functions/tasks of ministry that might come into play in this situation. Then you will develop a theological understanding and a response and follow up.

You will need time with each other to talk through the situations, raise questions, and then think through the key theological issues/questions that need to be asked. Then and only then can you move to an informed and possible response/follow up.

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