

COS 524 Spring Term, 2023

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:

- In-person class sessions at Spring Heights Education Center
 - March 1-19, 2023
 - April 14-16, 2023
- Written work for assignments will be due by email on or before dates indicated for class sessions or date of assignment for final paper.
- The final "situation" in ministry will be a case study and will be approached using two or more functions/roles of ministry as per our readings and class discussion. This will be explained ahead of time during class sessions.

COURSE READINGS, PREPARATION, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Session One Class--

Assigned Readings for March 17-19th

1. Read Willimon's Chapters: Introduction-1-2-3-4-5-6-13
2. Read Cahalan's Chapters 1-2-3-4
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 11, 2023. 1 to 1 ½ pages for each question--

1. **Willimon** indicates that ministry is "difficult" today. What is he saying here? Elaborate/give examples you from your own ministry?
2. **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?
3. **Willimon** in **chapters 3 and 4** talks about "the Pastor as Priest" and the "Priest as Pastor." What is the difference? Why is he making this differentiation? What have you learned or is challenging you?
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 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." Take up to 2 pages as need for this question.
5. **Cahalan** sets forth in chapter in chapter 3 the similarities and differences of discipleship and a ministry of leading disciples. From this chapter, and your reflections, share what it means to have a "vocation" to ministry.

Session Two Classes--

Assigned Readings for April 14 -16

1. Read Willimon: Chapters 7,8,9,10,11,12.
2. Read Cahalan: Chapters 5,6,7
3. Read Wood and Blue: Part One and then pick three or four "incidents and situations" to reflect on and make initial decisions about how to be "attentive to God"
4. Watch YouTube selections by Kent Millard

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4qXBsB8DxQ&list=PLBgQQ8eFwsj7bVFCvz2_yzSB3zFNeUOBf&index=2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnwrGF3Djj0>

Session 2 Written Assignments (3 pages each) to be brought to class on April 14th and then e-mailed to me by April 18th.

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.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT (post class session)

You and your assigned partner will have the following week after class to confer. This final assignment is to be completed and sent in by E Mail by April 24th (4-5 pages)

Task: 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; pay 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 both short term and long term. Then you will develop a theological understanding and leadership 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 with follow up.

More information will be given about this assignment during our class sessions.