

1-1-2005

IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

Virginia Todd Holeman

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Final Version – August 5, 2005

IS502XL--VOCATION OF MINISTRY [3 HOURS]

Dates: Tuesday, September 6 – Monday, December 12, 2005

Enrollment Capacity: 20

Professor: Virginia Todd Holeman, Ph.D.

Professor of Counseling

E: Toddy_Holeman@asburyseminary.edu (via ISP),
OR <Toddy Holeman> (via FirstClass Client)

O: 859.858.2212 (direct line)

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Welcome to Vocation of Ministry! I am delighted to be your instructor and learning guide for this course. You may already have a strong sense of who you are in Christ and the implications of his call upon your life. If so, this course should help you to strengthen and to further clarify the nature and implications of that call. On the other hand, you may yet feel tentative about a "call" and vocation. Be of good cheer. We're embarking on an exploratory journey that should lead you toward making some vocational commitments. Together we will grow in Christ and in embodying his claims upon our lives. I'm here to support you on the journey and to hold you accountable along the way. Blessings, Toddy Holeman

First things first: “The development of this extended learning syllabus is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the Internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (Toddy Holeman).” Thanks for honoring these instructions.

And then some preliminaries: Teaching and learning online is a growing experience for us all. Periodically we will need to extend grace to one another as we communicate and work together in this medium. For example, are the instructions clear? Are the assignments and discussions working? Are you having problems? Please let me know. What I might consider “crystal clear” might seem as “clear as mud” to you.

Also let me and your course mates know if you find that you are going to be “off line” for a time. That will save us from wondering where you are.

It has also been my experience that life throws curve balls into our well-constructed plans. If you find yourself falling behind because life has overwhelmed you, please contact me by phone or e-mail as soon as you can so we can discuss your situation and problem solve together. Too often students ignore the support and help that a professor can offer at the front end of a crisis.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course seeks to ask and address the question, "How is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained?" The purpose of this course is to explore

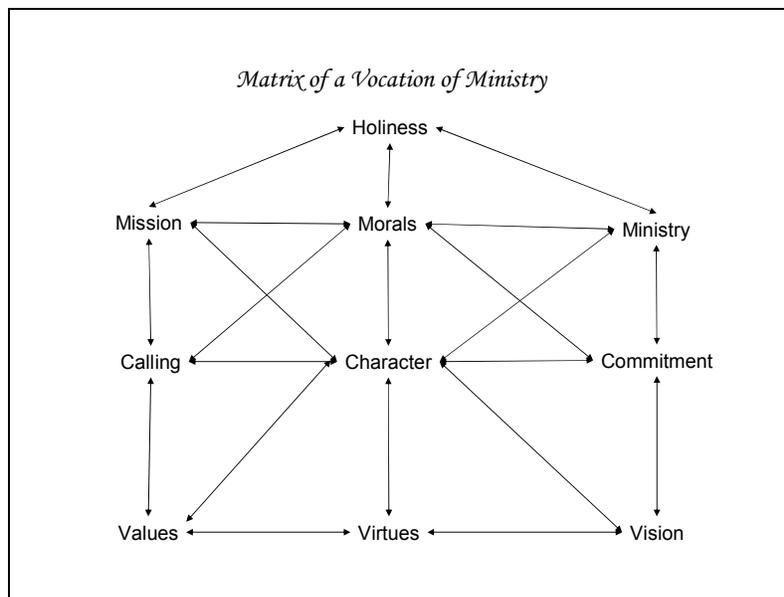
from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

1. Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective;
2. Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace;
6. Articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan consistent with vocational discernment.

Matrix of a Vocation of Ministry



The Matrix of Vocation of Ministry gives you a visual representation of where we are heading in this course [not drawn to scale ☺]. Ultimately we are studying how a vocation of ministry contributes to a life characterized by holiness, a concept that is central to a Wesleyan understanding of the spiritual life. Each module will build upon the previous one, and all

modules will ultimately relate to leading a life characterized by holiness. In Module One we explore the relationship among **values, calling, and mission**. In Module Two we add an investigation into **virtues, character, and morals**. In Module Three we add an examination of **vision, commitment, and ministry**. The material in each module delves into various facets of the matrix. Your written assignments require you to weave your current understanding of your own call to a vocation of ministry with all material [text, web, media, etc.] as they relate to the matrix.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This e-course is structured around required readings, video and audio presentations, e-team conferencing, spiritual formation groups, personal engagement with "works of piety" and "works of mercy" that are central to Wesleyan thought and practice, and written assignments. Our work week runs from Tuesday Noon (ET) to Tuesday Noon (ET). I will post at least one week "ahead" to help ease the burden for those of you with travel schedules.

What follows are the requirements for this course and their relative weight toward your final grade.

1. E-Conferences (20%)

1.1 E-Conferences

- 1.1.1 I will assign you to an e-team for conferencing.
- 1.1.1 Each week (normally) your e-team will collaborate to complete an assignment that relates to the goals for each module.
- 1.1.2 Postings will normally range between 50 and 150 words.
- 1.1.3 E-conferencing calls for good "e-manners." Remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, **SO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU PUT THINGS IN WRITING!!!!** You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis. ☺
- 1.1.4 I will monitor interaction and discussion of the assignments and grade your individual contribution to the overall discussion content as well as your contribution to facilitating the group discussion process.
- 1.1.5 At the conclusion of each week (transition Tuesdays) all postings to the Discussion Center will be moved to the Archives. While you will not be able to respond to these postings, you will be able to access the summary of discussions for the week. I will remind you of the dates and times this will occur from week-to-week.
- 1.1.6 This area also relates to Course Objective 2: *Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry.* You will demonstrate your gradual mastery of this goal over the course of the semester as you participate in the on-line discussions. The grading rubric below clues you into important aspects of E-Conferencing:

Sample Grading Rubric for E-Conference Assignments:

- a. Did you give a succinct, understandable statement that reflected how you understood the text content as it relates to the discussion question?
- b. Did you reflect critically on the interface between course content and personal experience?
- c. Did you post your own answers/responses in a timely way, so as to promote conversation among the members of your team?
- d. How effective were you in generating ideas/proposals for group interaction?
- e. How effective were you in your engagement with the ideas/proposals generated by others on your Team?
- f. Did you respond to your Teammates as per the instructions for the exercise?
- g. Did you attend to issues of form and style appropriate to formal writing?

1.2. Cross-Cultural Worship Experience (5%)

Report Due: Friday, October 7, 2005 by 12:00 midnight [ET]

Course Objective 3: *Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry.*

During the semester you will engage in learning activities that relate to our course goals. You are expected to attend one worship service in a congregation that is culturally or ethnically different from your own. If you are a pastor, start now to make preparations to be relieved of duty for one Sunday or Wednesday in order to fulfill this assignment. If you are living internationally so that you already experience cross-cultural worship on a regular basis, please contact me so that I can adjust the requirement accordingly. If you currently worship in a multi-ethnic, multi-racial setting, please contact me that I can adjust the requirement accordingly. Include a one-page summary report of your church visit with your module one paper.

Go to the following web site. http://www.nopartiality.net/sess_8.htm

Following the instructions for the *field trip* and *think through writing assignment #1*.

You may want to print it and take it with you to the worship service. The questions in the writing assignment are “good food for thought” to help you engage in critical thinking in this different worship setting. Include a one-page summary report of your church visit with your module one paper. Due Friday, October 7, 2005 by 12:00 midnight [ET]

2. Spiritual Formation Group (10%)

Report Due: Friday, Dec. 2, 2005, by 12 midnight [ET]

Course Objective 5: *Demonstrate commitment to "the way" of the Christian disciple through immersion in the means of grace.*

Because spiritual formation is an important part of this course, you will participate in a weekly small group that provides opportunity for fellowship, sharing, and prayer. You will begin this commitment by the second week of class. If you are not currently in a group, you may start one on your own. Your group should have at least two other persons

in it and meet weekly for one hour each week. Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline* will provide the foundational content for weekly reading and group reflections. One page summary report of your experience is due on Friday, Dec. 2, 2005, by 12 midnight (ET).

Goals for the spiritual formation group:

- ◆ Focus on practices that are consistent with Wesley's "means of grace."
- ◆ Provides an opportunity for mutual accountability. Participants designate their own goals and all share the journey of growth in grace.
- ◆ Focus on prayer – corporate and personal.
- ◆ Mutual sharing. While you may be the designated facilitator, this is not a "me teach you" format but a "let's learn together as members of God's family."

3. **Commitment to Social Justice (5%)**

Report Due: Friday, Nov. 11, 2005, 12 midnight [ET]

Course Objective 1: Understand the nature of Christian vocation (including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective, and Course Objective 3: Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry

A commitment to social justice is one of the emphases of the Wesleyan tradition. You are expected to invest a minimum of 4 hours of service in your community. You may work in a mercy ministry that your church sponsors, or you may choose to volunteer to help in some other community service organization. For example, your group can serve dinner at a Ronald McDonald House in your area, work for a soup kitchen, help out at the Salvation Army, work on a Habitat for Humanity home, give respite to a full-time caregiver, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person, etc. Please clear your project with me in advance. You are to write a brief (one-page) description of your service involvement describing one thing about the experience that stands out for you and your personal reaction to the experience. Submit this report concurrent with your Module 2, In-Process Paper on Friday, Nov. 11, 2005, 12 midnight [ET].

4. **"In-Process" Papers (60%)**

Module 1 Paper Due – Friday, October 7, 2005; 12 midnight [ET] 15%

Module 2 Paper Due – Friday, November 11, 2005; 12 midnight [ET] 20%

Module 3 Paper Due – Monday, December 12, 2005; 12 midnight [ET] 25%

Course Objective 6: Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call into God's ministry. Other objectives also relate to these papers.

Over the course of the semester you will prepare three "in-process" papers that integrate course content, your understanding of your vocation of ministry, and assessment surveys where appropriate. These you will send to my electronic office (IS502TH Office) as an attached document.

In this class your papers are personal reflections about all course material covered (that is, they are not just journaling or stream of consciousness writing). You must demonstrate your degree of engagement with the reading, lectures, and discussion material in your paper. Write your paper in the first person without an attempt to preach to others.

Your paper should use one-inch margins and a 12-point font like Times New Roman, double-spaced. Document your sources within the body of the paper, for example (Lewis, 45) and give your bibliographic information at the end of your paper.

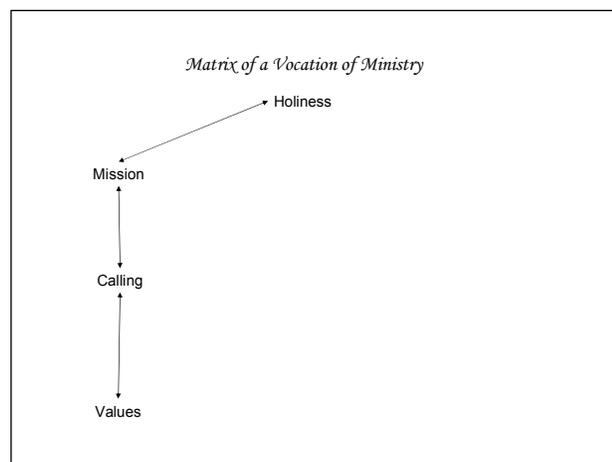
- 4.1 Papers must conform to MLA form and style according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].
- 4.2 I will grade all submitted work and will seek to return your papers to you in a timely fashion.
- 4.3 All written work is due by 12:00 Noon (ET) on the due date.
- 4.4 If you need to negotiate an alternate due date with me, please discuss this with me BEFORE the assignment is due.

Module 1 In-Process Paper

Due – Friday, October 7, 2005; 12 midnight [ET] 15%

You will prepare a 4-5 page “in-process” personal, paper that integrates and cross-references the first four weeks of the matrix on the course content about values, calling, mission, and holiness from the readings, lectures, class discussions, and assignments.

The central theme of the paper is: **Spiritual Autobiography: My Call to Ministry**. In your paper you should clearly demonstrate that you have read and interacted with the assigned readings. With reference to pertinent course material, discuss the development your values and your call to Christian ministry in light of God’s mission to the world. Select highlights from your life that reveal God’s hand leading you to this point in your journey. Discuss what you learned from the results of your DISC instrument, your sense of your spiritual gifts, talents and work experience that will help, or hinder, your future ministry and how you see your seminary education as a means for preparing you for the work of “equipping the saints” for ministry. This paper should include an answer to the questions: *how can growth in personal and social holiness help me fulfill my calling?*

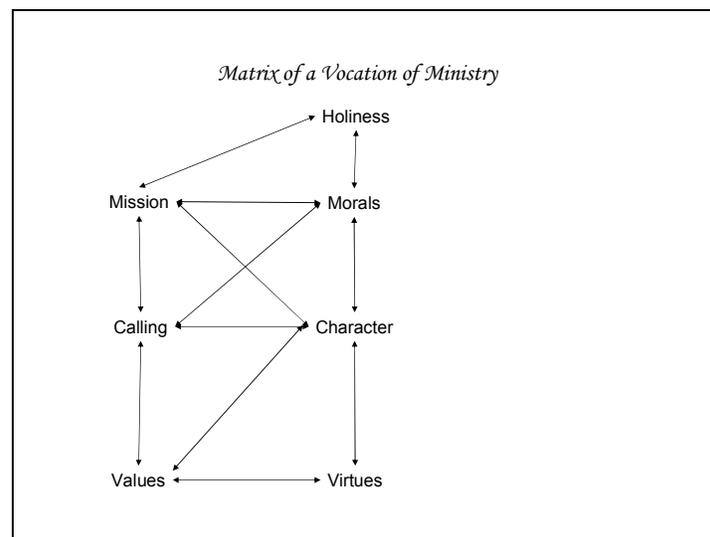


Remember to include your response paper to for attending a culturally different worship service along with your Module 1 paper. Please send attach this as a second document rather than embedding it in your Module 1 paper.

Module 2 In-Process Paper

Due – Friday, November 11, 2005; 12 midnight [ET] 20%

For the Module 2 In-Process Paper please write a personal 5-6 page integrative paper on the first seven weeks of the course content from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments for Modules 1 and 2. The central theme of this paper is: **Integrity in Ministry**. Write from the four points of the matrix on virtues, character, morals and holiness. Include an answer to the question: *How can a life of personal and social holiness help develop a life of integrity?* Review the writing instructions for Module 1. Include new material from the first four points of the matrix in Module 1 (material not found in your first paper) on values, calling, mission, and holiness. See the matrix design for cross-referencing this paper from the major topics of the matrix of the first module.



Remember to also attach [as a separate document] your social justice project report.

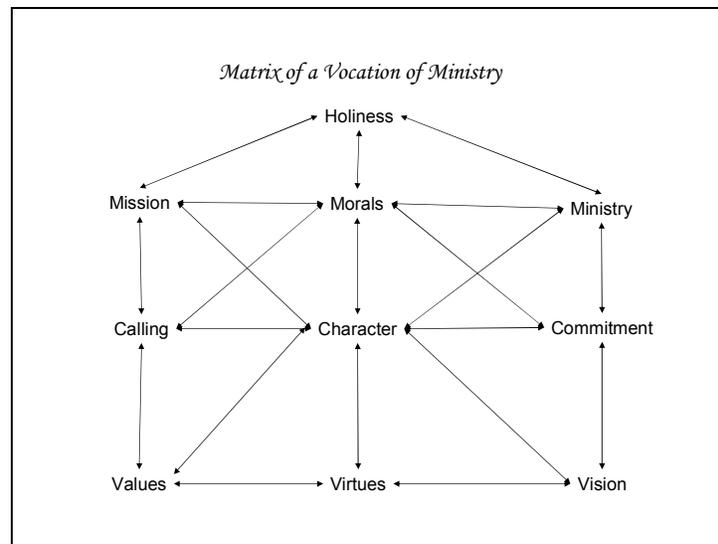
Module 3 In-Process Paper

Paper Due – Monday, December 12, 2005; 12 midnight [ET] 25%

For Module 3, you will write an 8 to 10 page personal integrative paper that cross-references all class material to date in Modules 1, 2, and 3. The purpose of this assignment is to help you create an integrated understanding of ministry. The central theme of this paper should be: **My Commitments to a Vision for Ministry and a Rule of Life**. Write about the present state of your vision for your future in ministry. Include your views about working in a multi-cultural world with persons from different races, socio-economic status and gender different from your own. Describe the kind of

personal, family, and institutional commitments you are willing to make to fulfill your calling to ministry. As a separate document, you will also include your Rule of Life. Specific instructions for developing a Rule of Life will be available in the Course Center.

You will be evaluated upon the written demonstration of your ability to reflect on the assigned texts, class lectures, discussions, and class assignments. In your paper avoid repeating things you wrote for Modules 1 and 2. Do not just list words from the various units of study. Review the writing instructions in Module 1 and the grading rubric guidelines before writing your paper. The completion of this document should help you choose Seminary courses that will best prepare you for fulfilling your vision for ministry. It will also provide material for responding to written and personal interview questions regarding your call, motivation, and preparation for ministry.



5. Required Reading/Resources

You should call the Asbury Seminary Bookstore, managed by Cokesbury, to order your text books. They will be sent to you by mail.

Required Textbooks

Clouse, B. & Clouse, R. B. (1989). *Women in Ministry: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Foster, Richard J. (1998). *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. HarperSan Francisco.

Grenz, S. & Bell, R. (1995). *Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Guinness, O. (1998). *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Waco, TX: Word.

- Muto, S. & vanKaam, A. (1994). *Divine guidance: Seeking to find and follow the will of God*. Pittsburgh, PA: Epiphany Books.
- Sire, J. (2000). *Habits of the mind: Intellectual life as a Christian calling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Wesley, J. (1977/1777). *A plain account of Christian perfection*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press.

ATS Electronic Reserves

- Collins, K. J. (1998). "Spirituality and Critical Thinking: Are they really so different?" *Evangelical Journal*, 16(1), 30-43. ISSN: 0741-1758*
- Trepagnier, B. (2001). "Deconstructing Categories: The Exposure of Silent Racism." *Symbolic Interaction*, 24(2).*

*Accessing ATS Electronic Reserves:

A special folder for ATS Electronic Reserves for this course is located within our Course Icon called "Supplemental Texts."

Web-based Documents

- Wesley, John. Sermon "The Means of Grace." <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/serm-016.stm>
- Women and Wesley's Time <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/wesleywomen.stm>
- Facione, Peter A. "Critical Thinking: What It Is and Why It Counts." http://www.calpress.com/pdf_files/what&why.pdf
- I have also downloaded this as a pdf file in the Course Center.
- Scriven, Michael & Paul, Richard, *Defining Critical Thinking*. Located at <http://www.criticalthinking.org/Univeristy/univclass/Defining.html>
- Session activities from the on-line small group guide located at www.nopartiality.net
- Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" found at <http://www.utoronto.ca/acc/events/peggy1.htm>

Some may pop-up within a week's assignment.

Other Required Materials

- Course CD's (distributed by Information Technology Department via snail-mail)
- DiSC & Spiritual Gifts* (distributed during the first month of class via website)

Recommended Textbooks

- Conde-Frazier, E., Kang, S., Parrett, G. A. (2004). *A many colored kingdom: Multicultural dynamics for spiritual formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Stevens, R. P. (1999). *The other six days: Vocation, work, and ministry in biblical perspective*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Eerdmans/Regent.
- Willimon, W. H. (2000). *Calling and character: Virtues of the ordained life*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.

GRADING POLICY

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

Grading Process

When you submit your in-process papers I will use the “Insert Comment” function from Word as my way to “write” my comments on your paper.

The Asbury Seminary School of Theology faculty has adopted the following standards for faculty grading of papers:

- ◆ Timely feedback: For assessment of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of “timely” feedback is met when students have their work marked, graded, and returned within one week of its submission...Moreover, when assignment “B” builds on assignment “A,” assignment “A” should be returned before assignment “B” falls due. Longer assignments are often due at the end of the term, and are not subject to this definition.
- ◆ Substantive feedback: For assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of “substantive” feedback is met when students receive responses that alert them to what they have done well and how they might improve their performance in subsequent work.

Late Assignments and Papers

E-team assignments or discussion center assignments. These assignments are time-sensitive and are not amendable to negotiating a different due date. You will receive no credit for an e-team/discussion center assignment that is posted late. If you are not active for more than three weeks in the course discussion center and your team folder you will not receive a passing grade. “Inactive” means that you have not posted at all or that you demonstrate minimal participation for more than three weeks.

Due dates for In-Process papers *may* be adjusted provided you discuss this with me at least one week ahead of time. A paper or assignment that is late *without prior permission from the instructor* receives a grade but no written comments. If your paper is more than 1 week late, then your grade is lowered by 1/3 of a grade for each late week.

Incomplete Policy

A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable emergency**, which does **not** include failure to turn in course work or attending to church

work or other employment. A request for an incomplete requires not only my approval, but also the approval of the Dean. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

Other Grading Points of Note

In this class I use a variety of different notations. Some items are marked on a “credit-no credit” basis. Most e-team discussions are rated on a mark of 1-10. All in-process papers are graded on a range of 1-5. Each of these “ways” of marking is weighted differently. The formula for tallying your grade employs a method of standardizing these ways of marking. I will be happy to send the full formula to you should you be interested in it.

When all is said and done and all the grades are averaged together, here is the final scale of measurement:

100-96	=	A
95-93	=	A-
92-87	=	B+
86-84	=	B
83-81	=	B-
80-77	=	C+
76-74	=	C
73-71	=	C-
70-67	=	D+
66-64	=	D
63-61	=	D-
60 and below	=	F

COURSE OUTLINE AND LEARNING GOALS

1. *Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Vocation from a Wesleyan Perspective (September 6-October 11, 2005)*

At the completion of module 1, you will be able to:

- Discuss core Christian values;
- Articulate your personal core values and how they influenced your call to ministry;
- Discuss how your values influenced your call to ministry and share how you responded to a perceived call of God;
- Relate your calling to your understanding of a personal mission in life and how this connects to the mission of God;
- Write a Spiritual Autobiography (= Module 1 paper)

2. *Module 2: The Call to Integrity: Christian Virtues, Character, Morals, and a Life of Holiness (October 11, 2005-November 8, 2005)*

At the completion of this module, you will be able to:

- Discuss the relationship between virtue, ethics, and the fruit of the Spirit;
- Develop a list of personal Christian virtues for prayer and practice;

- Distinguish the difference between personality development and character transformation;
- Articulate the importance of moral behavior that leads to a life of integrity;
- Formulate a theological understanding of temptation;
- Be receptive to the gift of the Holy Spirit and develop a plan for the process of growth in a life of personal and social holiness.

3. ***Module 3: Commitment to God's Vision for Ministry (November 8, 2005-December 9, 2005)***

At the completion of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the relationship between the kind of person you want to be and the work you are being called to;
- Decide on the commitments you are making to the Lord, others, yourself, and institutions;
- Formulate a Rule of Life;
- Articulate an understanding of ministry from a theology of mission;
- Integrate all 10 points of the matrix for a vocation of ministry.

ONLINE (COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM) COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The Collaborative Classroom is built upon the First Class Client platform that Asbury Seminary uses for its e-mail and intranet systems. An "IS502" folder will be loaded on your Desktop within First Class and within this folder you will be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as any other materials I may choose to post for the entire class to access.
2. The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Discussion Center. You will also post all of your entire-class (versus team) discussion responses here. Normally these will be organized around threaded discussions. In a threaded discussion, your comment builds on the comments of those who preceded you. You might think of a threaded discussion as a file drawer in which all the comments are organized sequentially so that you can follow the flow of conversation. Each new question or posting begins a different threaded discussion.
3. Your work with your e-team will be done within the Team Folder. Any intra-team discussions will take place here, in contrast to the Discussion Center that is for the entire class.

4. The IS502X Office is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly to all your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly. It is also the place where you will send your assignments as attached files.
5. The Archives Center will be used for storing correspondence that has already been explored during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unwieldy. At the conclusion of each discussion period, I will summarize the individual postings and file them in the Archives Center.
6. The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among participants. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.
7. The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL and DMIN students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, “Guidelines for Success,” Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a PowerPoint Viewer, as well as a Real Audio player. I encourage you to explore these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary’s on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

ExL Contact Information:

For **general questions regarding the ExL program**, email ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

For **technical support**, email ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

For **library research support**, contact Information Commons at Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu **Toll-free 1-866-454-2733**

This is the best place to start when you have questions about library resources. Help is available Monday-Thursday from 8AM-7PM and Friday and Saturday from 8AM-5:45PM. If the people at the desk can not answer your questions, they will direct you to the person or department who can.

ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/reference books from Asbury Seminary’s Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the library loan office for information on costs and instructions on how to make requests. ExL students are also encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.