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IS 502 Vocation of Ministry

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IS502 Vocation of Ministry
3 hours – 2:30-5:15 pm – Tuesday
Spring 2004

(Notice: This is a pre-semester syllabus for your advanced preparation for class. A final syllabus may be distributed on the first day of class. Assigned books will not be changed.)

Professor:

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Course Description

This course seeks to ask and address the question, How is a vocation to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained? The purpose of the course is to explore the biblical and theological foundations of Christian vocation by examining the connection between a call to ministry and the formation of persons for 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 the church and in the world.
2. Grasp the relationship between the habits of the mind and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of integrity for Christian ministry through the development of virtues, character, moral formation, with a clear understanding of their relationship to boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to a life of personal and social holiness through immersion in the means of grace and service;
6. Be able to articulate a coherent narrative of one's own call, gifts and graces for ministry; and
7. Project a curricular plan consistent with one's vocational discernment and vision for ministry.

Mode of Instruction

The class will be taught using these modes of instruction: (a) We will meet together as one large group for some levels of instruction and interaction; (b) The class will be organized into covenant discipleship groups that will emphasize "works of piety" and "works of mercy," which are integral to the course; and (c) the discipleship groups will engage in assigned projects to provide direct experience in selected course components.

Means of Student Evaluation

1. Related to course instruction

- Your attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you are absent [for whatever reasons] for more than three sessions (or the equivalent) you will receive a failing grade for the course. Classes start at 2:30 and end at 5:15. Three late arrival, or early leaving, will equal an absence.
- By the conclusion of Module 1 you will have attended one service in a church that is ethnically different from for yours. If you are currently worshipping in a cross-cultural setting, or have had cross-cultural worship experiences over a long period of time (e.g., international students or other ethnic minority), you should speak with the instructor for ways to adjust this assignment. (5 %)
- You are expected to attend and actively participate in all of your covenant discipleship group meetings for the full time they meet. These groups are student lead. Meeting time is built into our regular class period. If you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reason), you will **not** receive credit for this component of the course. Peer group members will evaluate the quality of your participation and contribution to the group process and fulfillment of learning goals. (10%)
- Participate in the 4-hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group before the end of Module II. (5%)
- The reading requirement for this course is 1500 pages. You will submit a reading report to document the degree of your completion of required course reading. This reading report is due the last day of class, **May 18**. (15%).

2. “In-Process” Paper, Module I (10%).

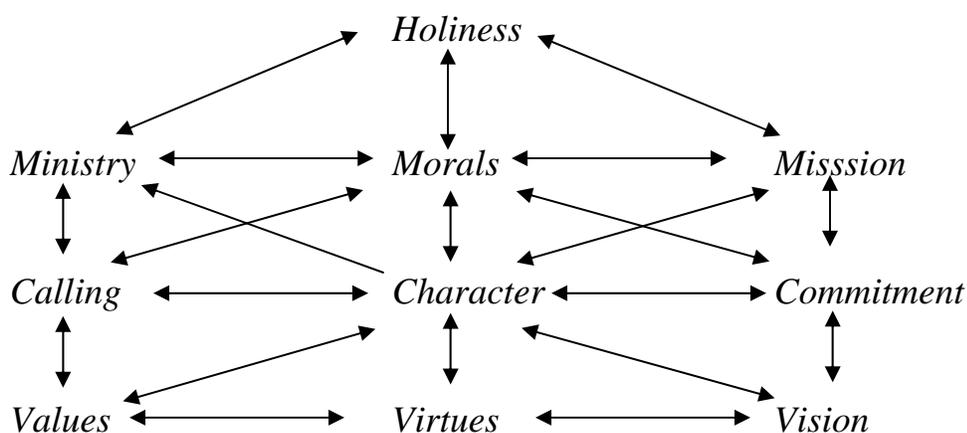
You will prepare a five-page “in-process” personal paper that integrates the first four weeks of course content from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments. Relates this to ministry in a multi-cultural world with male and female colleagues in ministry. The central theme of the paper is your call to ministry. In your paper you should demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings. Describe how they help you reflect upon your values and your call to Christian ministry. Discuss how the results from your DISC instrument, your sense of your spiritual gifts, talents and work experience will help, or hinder, your future ministry. How do you see your seminary education as a means for preparing you for the work of equipping the saints for ministry? This module paper should include an answer to the question: how can growth in personal and social holiness help me fulfill my calling? Your paper should be typed-double space, 1” margins, 12 cpi font. Document your sources in the body of the paper; for example, (Guinness 30). Give your references information at the end of your paper. Review the grading rubric distributed by the instructor as you write this and other papers. Due **March 9**.

2. “In Process” Paper, Module II (10%) You will write a personal five to six pages integrative “in process” paper on the first seven weeks of the course content from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments for modules I and II. The central theme of this paper will be on integrity in ministry. It should include material not found in your first paper about your

values, calling, understandings of ministry, virtues, character, and moral behaviors. This paper should include an answer to the question: how can growth in personal and social holiness of life help me maintain personal integrity? See the design below for cross-referencing this paper from the major topics of the first two modules. Due **April 6**.

2. Major Position Paper – 30%

You will write a 10-12 page major integrative paper that cross-references all class material to date. Your future ministry is the focus of this paper. The purpose of this assignment is to help you create a vision for your future. You will be evaluated on the demonstration of your ability to reflect on the assigned texts, class lectures, discussions and class assignments in your paper. Use previously stated guidelines for writing your paper. The completion of this document will help you choose seminary courses that will best prepare you for fulfilling your vision. Use the design below to conceptualize the task of integration. Due **May 4**.



3. Creative Project – 15%

Your covenant discipleship group will choose an artistic mode (painting, sculpture, poetry, creative writing, photo essay, original music composition) in order for your group to give expression to your understanding of “vocation of ministry.” Or, you may choose a project that communicates course-related material (devotional guide that focuses on “call” and “vocation”; series of lesson plans that deal with “call” and “vocation” for an age-specific class, etc.). Your work should not only reflect your collective and personal reflections but it should also include appropriate aspects of our course content. It is expected that this will be a fresh work. You are to get approval from the instructor for your idea before proceeding.

This project represents an important course assignment because it taps into other learning styles beside the visual and auditory. Each person in the group is expected to invest a *minimum of 8 hours* in the preparation of the project. Some will spend much more time than that. Projects will be shared in class, **May 4 & 11**.

In addition to the presentation, each group will submit:

1. A confidential individual log of your time investment, a brief description of your contribution to the group project, and evaluation of each team member's participation in the project.
2. A clear and succinct statement of the purpose of your project.
3. Learning objectives for observers (artistic) or participants (sermon series, etc.).
4. For art based projects: Submit a detailed discussion of the message you are portraying about "vocation" and "call."
5. For text based projects: Submit an abstract and the text material.

Creative Project Grading Criteria:

1. How substantial was your individual contribution to the project? (Did your contribution help to move the group project forward to completion in a significant way?)
2. How well did your group present the project to the class? (Did it reflect "one" mind or did it seem pieced together and disjointed?)
3. How well did your project integrate course content and personal reflection? (Does your project demonstrate an understanding of course content in addition to your personal journey?)
4. How well prepared was the written material your group submitted in conjunction with the project? (Style of writing, spelling, grammar, documentation etc.)

Required Texts

- Chilcote, Paul. (2001) Wesley Speaks on Christian Vocation. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.
- Gill, David W. (2000). Becoming Good: Building Moral Character Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Rediger, G. Lloye. (2003) Beyond the Scandals: A Guide to Healthy Sexuality for Clergy. Fortress Press
- Guinness, O. (1998). The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life. Waco, TX: Word.
- Sire, James W. (2000). Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.
- Stevens, R. Paul. (1999) The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective. Vancouver, British Columbia: Eerdmans/Regent

Required Reading on Reserve

- Brookfield, S. D. (1987). Developing Critical Thinkers. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 1-55542-356-6; pg. 3-50; 89-110 [Ch 1,2,3,6]
- Collins, K. J. (1998). Spirituality and Critical Thinking: Are they really so different? Evangelical Journal, 16(1), 30-43. ISSN: 0741-1758
- Groothuis, R.M. (1997). Good News for Women: A biblical picture of gender equality, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker; 19-63;121-144;189-229. [Chapters 1, 2, 5, 8, 9]
- Hauerwas, Stanley. (1981). A Community of Character. Notre Dame: Nortre Dame Press; 111-152 [Chapters 6, 7]

Grading Policy

Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1” margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLA format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library]. Review the grading rubric provided by the instructor as you write your papers.

A 1/3 deduction in grade will be assessed for every week that your paper is late. Late papers receive a grade, but little written feedback. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date, consult with the Professor BEFORE the assignment is due.

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. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines

1. By the second week of class, you will be placed in a Covenant Discipleship Group of 4-6 persons. Because spiritual formation is an important part of this course. I have also built time for this assignment into our weekly schedule to facilitate your ease of meeting so that no one has to juggle his or her schedule to find a meeting time outside of class, unless you choose to do this.
2. The groups will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the remainder of the semester the groups will focus on the nine key dimensions that tie this course together. Each of these dimensions should be related to the integrative tenth dimension – holiness, both as a gift from God, and our growth in personal and social holiness. Group members are expected to contribute biblical references, resources from reading and personal experiences directly related to the each subject for discussion.
3. Each group will be student lead. I anticipate that you will share leadership among all group members. At the conclusion of each session a volunteer will be sought to lead at the next session.
4. One student in each group will take attendance. Please note that if you miss more than three sessions (for whatever reasons), you will not receive credit for this component of the course.
5. Each person should read in advance the material to be discussed.

6. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

A commitment to social justice

Each group will select a service/mission project. The project is to be completed AS A GROUP and must involve at least 4 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, work for a soup kitchen, help out at Bread of Life, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person, etc. Please clear your project with the instructor. The group secretary [a.k.a attendance taker] will collect from each group member a one-two page personal report that describes things about the experience that stands out for him or her. Due by March 23.



Class Schedule

Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Values and Vocation in the context of God's Mission to the World.

February 10, 17, 25, March 2

Goals:

At the completion of module 1, you should:

1. Articulate your personal core values and how they influenced your call to ministry.
1. Discuss the various means for discerning a call to ministry and share how you responded to a perceived call of God;
2. Locate the call to some form of Christian ministry.

February 10: Personal Values That Sustain a Life of Christian Ministry.

This session provides an introduction to the class, organization of small group and a forum for Articulating values and their influence on the call to ministry.

Reading List: Guinness, Ch. 1-7. (This book was written to be read one chapter per day.)

Covenant Group Focus: You will introduce yourself by sharing your spiritual journey and the shift in values that influenced your call to ministry. Be prepared to share with your covenant group your key values. Answer the question: how do my values relate to how I got to seminary and how my values will guide my future ministry?

February 17: Calling

This week's discussion will be on the discernment process in a call to ministry

Reading: Guinness, Ch. 1-14

Stevens, Ch. 1-4

Rom 12, I Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph 4:11 (also I Cor. 1:5-7; 12:29-30; I Cor 13:8; II Cor 8:7; I Thess. 5:20; I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6-7; Heb 2:4; I Pet 4:10-11)

Covenant Group Focus: You will share your discernment of God's call upon your life. How has the reading influenced your understanding of your call? Are you primarily interested in a career change or to dedicate yourself to a life of holiness?

February 24: A Wesleyan Perspective on Vocation and Call.

This week's discussion is on Wesley's understanding of vocation and call. We will discuss the idea of personal vocational strengths, spiritual gifts, and their relationship to vocation and call

Reading: Chilcote, (Read as much of this book as possible before this date.)

Guinness, Ch. 15-22;

Projective Assessment: "DISC "

Covenant Group Focus: Discuss how your initial ideas of a call to ministry have changed from your reading and class discussions. Share your perceived gifts and graces for ministry, and limitations that could hinder effectiveness in ministry.

March 2: Ministry

To complete this module we will be discussing the importance of calling for all of God's people to participate in His mission to the world and how we are equipped for this task. We will also be looking at our personal vocational strengths, spiritual gifts, talents, and how they relate to our values and discernment of a call to the vocation of ministry.

Reading: Stevens, (First read chapter 8, then read the first seven chapters.)

Groothuis, R.M. (1997). Good News for Women: A biblical picture of gender equality. (book and Chapters 1,2,5,8,9 on reserve)

1 Cor. 12, 13

Group Assignment: Out of the comfort zone worship cross cultural worship experience

Covenant Group Focus: You will use this session to help you and others in your group develop a theology of ministry that includes the whole people of God, yet has room for spiritual leadership. Indicate how the reading, and the DISC instrument help your understanding of your call to participate in Christian ministry? By the date of this class you should have attended a worship services of a church where the church is ethnically different from yourself. Discuss your experience of being a minority in this congregation. Reflect critically on prejudicial beliefs or myths and how you plan to address them. Share your ease or discomfort in working with persons of a different gender as peers in ministry. How did the visit to a church with a different ethnic background help you understand the importance of social holiness? How do you understand the role of women in ministry?

Means of assessment: See means of assessment section on page _____ for Module I paper due: **March 9.**



Module 2: The Call to Integrity.

This module will be a focus on the importance of Christian virtues, character, morals and the practice of a life of holiness for the development and maintenance of a life of Christian integrity.
March 9, 16, 23

Module 2 Goals

At the completion of this module, you should:

1. Understand the relationship between virtue ethics and the fruit of the Spirit;
2. Develop a list of personal Christian virtues for prayer and practice;
3. Distinguish the difference between personality development and character transformation;
4. Understand the importance of moral behavior that leads to a life of integrity;
5. Formulate a theological understanding of temptation;
6. Be receptive to the gift of the Spirit and develop a plan for the process of growth in a life of holiness.

March 9: Christian Virtues

This week will be an introduction to the influence of virtues on Christian integrity. You will develop a personal list of key moral, intellectual and physical virtues to share with group members. The relationship between virtues and the fruit of the Spirit should be addressed in your group discussions. Answer the question: how do Christian virtues relate to a life of holiness?

Reading: Gill, David W: *Becoming Good*, Chapters. 1-5

Wilson, Jonathan: *Gospel Virtues* Chapter 1,2,5 and 6 (This book is out of print. You will find copies on reserve.)

Hauerwas: Ch 6, pp. 111-128 *A Community of Character* (on reserve)

Galatians 5: 16-26; 11 Peter 1; 1Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 5-10

Covenant Group Focus: Group members will study the suggested scripture lessons, discuss the relationship between virtue ethics and the fruit of the Spirit, and develop a plan for growth in personal virtues. Also discuss the reading from Gill and Hauerwas.

March 16: Calling and Character

This session will focus on the similarities and differences between personality development and character formation for Christian leaders.

Reading: Gill, David W. *Becoming Good*, Chapters 6-10

Hauerwas: Ch 7, pp. 129-152, *A Community of Character*, (on reserve).

Covenant Group Focus: Share with the group what you perceive to be your character traits. Discuss the literature read for this class. Use some of your time to work on your creative project class presentation.

March 23: Morality in Christian Leadership.

This session will focus on the dynamics of temptation and the dangers of the misuse of power. The role of physical, mental, relational and spiritual health to issues of integrity will be discussed.

Reading: Gill: Becoming Good, Chapter 11
 Gretz, Stanley J., Bell, Roy D. (1995) Betrayal of Trust: Confronting and Preventing Clergy Sexual Misconduct. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.
 Freud, Sigmund, Moses and Monotheism, pp (on reserve).

Means of Evaluation for Module 2 – Second “In-Process” Position Paper #2 – Due April 13.
 See means of evaluation and requirements on p._____.



Module 3: Commitment to mission and a vision for ministry.

The purpose of this module is to help you create a vision for future ministry in keeping with God’s mission to the world, and understand the commitments necessary to realize this vision. April 6, 13, 20 and 27.

Module Goals:

At the completion of this module, you should

1. Understand the relationship between the kind of person you want to be and the work you want to do.
2. Decide on the commitments you are making to yourself, others and institutions.
3. Formulate an understanding of ministry from a theology of mission
4. Develop a curricular plan that will help prepare you for the kind of ministry you are called to do.

April 6: Formulating a vision for fulfilling a vocation of ministry

This class will be a discussion of the importance of discernment in creating a vision for the kind of person you want to be and the specific form of ministry you want to do in order to fulfill the call to ministry.

Required Reading:

King, Martin Luther, Jr. “I Have a Dream”

Covenant Group Focus: Come to class with a one-paragraph statement of your vision for ministry. Group members will assist each other in refining their vision for ministry during seminary and the first five-ten years after seminary. Use the handout to guide your thoughts for creating a vision.

April 13: Commitments

This class is an examination of personal, social and institutional commitments you are willing to make in order to live a life of ministry. If you plan to be ordained, or commissioned, you should bring to class the questions that will be asked of you in the examinations by your judicatory. Also bring a copy of personal commitments to God, self, others and institutions that you are making at this stage in your call and preparation for ministry.

Reading: Sire, James. Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling.
 Collins, K. J. “Spirituality and Critical Thinking.” (on reserve)

Covenant Group Focus: Share your list of commitments and ask for feedback from group colleagues. Discuss Sire's book, especially, his understanding of the connection between intellectual virtues and holiness.

April 23: Mission

This class will incorporate all previous sessions to bring us to the purpose of our call, the creation of personal integrity and a life of personal holiness so that we may participate in God's mission to the world.

Reading: Stevens, Ch

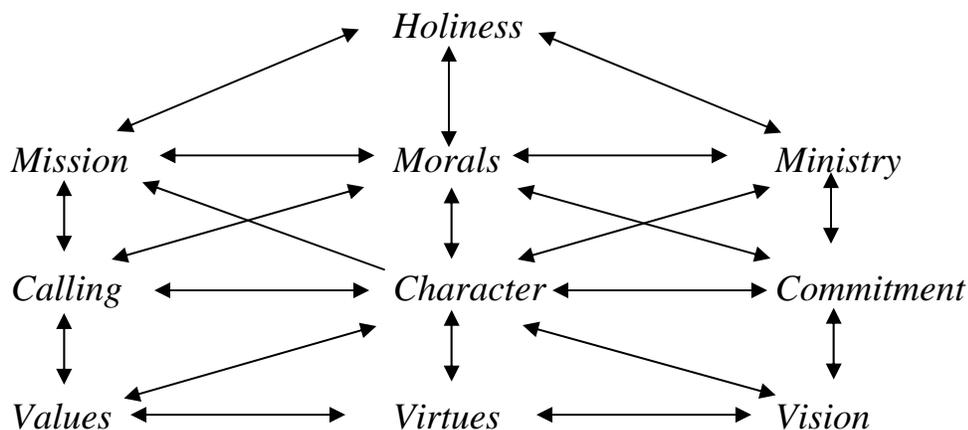
Covenant Group Focus: Discuss how this course has influenced your thinking about a vocation of ministry and participation in God's mission. Use most of the group time to plan for the class creative presentation.

Means of Assessment for Module 3

Instead of writing a separate paper for module 3, you will use material from this module and the first two modules for writing the major position paper. (See the bottom of page 2 and the top of page 3 of this syllabus).

Major Position Paper—Due November 18

You will write a 12-15 page major position paper on your call to ministry. This paper will integrate all class material to date, including assessment survey. You will integrate readings and insights from all modules into your final integrative paper. You are expected to demonstrate the use of other research material, in addition to assigned texts, to support your paper. Use the design below to conceptualize the subjects of this class that need to be integrated. (See page ____ for guidelines and means of assessment).





May 4: Covenant Discipleship groups will give a creative project presentation. A composite format, or one of the subjects in the class modules, should be used for the presentation. (See page 3 of this syllabus for description and means of assessment).

May 11: Group Presentations and “Fiesta”