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## IS 502 Vocation of Ministry

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## **IS502 - Vocation of Ministry**

**Fridays: 9:00-11:40**

### **Professor:**

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Office hours by appointment or drop by between classes

### **Course Description**

This course addresses 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 personal habits, spirituality and theological reflection in 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 and 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 personal vision for ministry and a curricular plan consistent with one's vocational discernment and vision.

### **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 (arriving late or leaving early), you will receive a failing grade for the course. Classes start at 9:00 and end at 11:40. Three late arrival, or early leaving, will equal an absence.
- By the conclusion of Module 1 you should have attended one service in a church that is ethnically different from yours. If you are currently worshipping in a cross-cultural setting, or have had significant cross-cultural worship experiences over a long period of time, speak with the instructor about ways to adjust this assignment (5 % of final grade).
- 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. During the semester you will evaluate your group participation and your peer group members will evaluate the quality of your participation to the group process and fulfillment of learning goals. (13% of final grade. (See evaluation rubric for group participation assessment)
- Participate in the 4-8 hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group before the end of Module II. (10% of final grade)
- The reading requirement for this course is a minimum of 1200 pages. Use the 40-20 minutes rule: 40 minutes of reading with 20 minutes of reflection for each hour of reading. 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 20**. (12% of final grade).

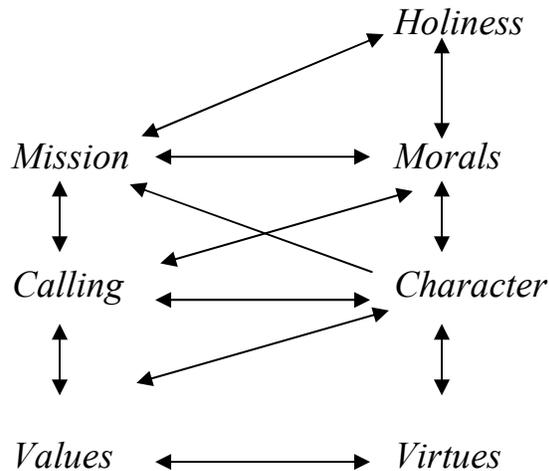
### 2. “In-Process” Paper, Module I

You will prepare a three to four 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: “**Calling**.” In your paper you should demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings. Write your reflections on your values and your call to Christian ministry in light of God’s mission to the world. 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 question: how will growth in personal and social holiness influence my values, help me fulfill my calling in light of God’s mission I the world? In this class your papers are personal reflections. They should be written with first person pronouns without an attempt at speaking to, or preaching to others.

Your paper should be numbered with double spaced lines. Use one-inch margins and 12 cpi font. Document your sources in the body of the paper, for example,

(Guinness, 30). Give your bibliographical information at the end of your paper.  
 (Review the grading rubric distributed by the instructor before you write this and the next two papers.) **Due March 11. This paper represents 10% of your final grade.**

3. Module II “In Process” Paper: You will write a personal four to five page 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: “**Integrity.**” Write from the viewpoint of character that demonstrates Christian virtues and moral behavior. Include an answer to the question: how can a life of personal and social holiness help develop Christian character and integrity? Review the writing instructions for Module I. Include material from the first four points of the matrix in Module I, but not found in your first paper, on values, calling, mission and holiness. See the design below for cross-referencing this paper from the major topics of the matrix of the first two modules. **Due April 1. This paper represents 15% of your final grade.**

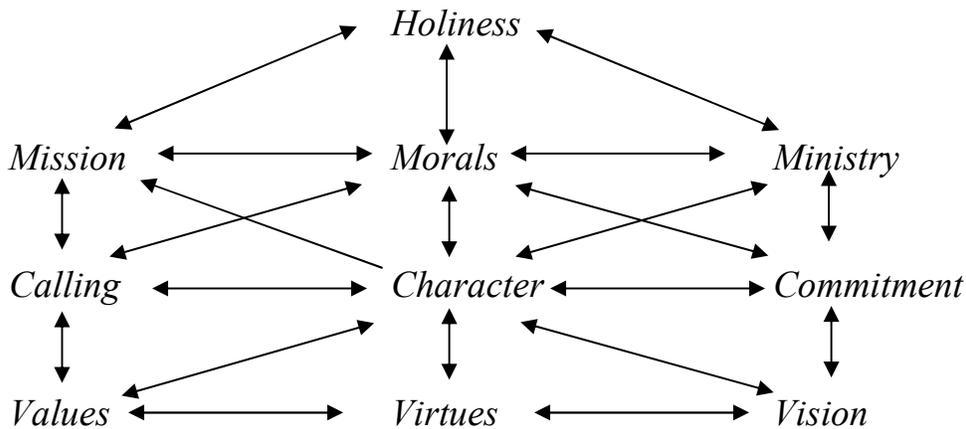


3. Module III “In Process” paper: You will write a six to eight page personal integrative paper that cross-references all class material to date from the matrix in modules I, II and III. The purpose of this assignment is to help you create an integrated understanding of ministry. The central them of the paper should be: “**Ministry Commitments.**” 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 and with a 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. Answer the question: “how will a life of personal and social holiness impact my calling, character and commitments?”

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 I and II. Do not just list words from

the various units of study. Review the writing instructions in Module I 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. Use the matrix design below to conceptualize the task of integration. **Due April 29. This paper represents 20% of the final grade.**

### A Matrix of a Vocation for Ministry



5. Creative Project: 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 6 and 13.**

In addition to the presentation, each group will submit:

- a. A confidential individual log of your time invested in the project, a brief description of your contribution to the group project, and evaluation of each team member’s participation in the project.
- b. A clear and succinct statement of the purpose of your project.
- c. Learning objectives for observers (artistic) or participant (sermon series, etc.).

For art based projects: Submit a detailed discussion of the message you are portraying about “vocation” and “call” and a brief abstract of the text material.

Creative Project Grading Criteria will respond to the following questions:

- a. 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?)
- b. How well did your group present the project to the class? (Did it reflect “one” mind or did it seem pieced together and disjointed?)
- c. 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?)
- d. How well prepared was the written material your group submitted in conjunction with the project? (Style of writing, spelling, grammar, documentation etc.)

**This project represents 15% of your final grade.**

### **Required Texts**

Drury, Keith. (2004) Holiness for Ordinary People, Indianapolis, Indiana: Wesleyan Publishing House

Gill, David W. (2000). Becoming Good: Building Moral Character Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.

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

Rediger, G. Lloyd. (2003) Beyond the Scandals: A Guide to Healthy Sexuality for Clergy. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press

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: Notre 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]. The pages of the paper must be numbered. Review the grading rubric provided by the instructor before you write your papers. Warning: web based search engines create temptations for plagiarism. Resist these temptations because new software programs also offer creative ways to discover plagiarism. Keep your integrity, and thereby avoid embarrassment.

**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. Seldom are Incompletes given. 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 teamwork and spiritual formation is an important part of this course I have also built time for group work into our weekly schedule to facilitate your ease of meeting so that you will rarely have to juggle your schedule to find a meeting time outside of class time.
2. The groups will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the remainder of the semester the groups will focus on the ten nine units, or dimensions that tie this course together. Each of these units should be related to, and integrated into the tenth dimension – holiness of heart and life, both as a gift from God, and your responsibility for 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. Folders will be one each table to receive and return student papers. Mark your attendance on the folder. 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. In order to effectively participate in-group discussions each group member should read in advance the material to be discussed.
6. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.
7. A grading rubric will be used in class to assess participants effectiveness in group processes.

## **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 4-8 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 you project with the instructor. (Note: students who live a long distance from other group members may petition to participate in another service/mission project closer to home.) 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 25.**



## **Class Schedule**

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

February 11, 18, 25 and March 4.

#### **Goals:**

At the completion of module 1, you should:

1. Have a clear understanding of core Christian values.
2. Articulate your personal core values and how they influenced your call to ministry.
3. Discuss how your values influenced your call to ministry and share how you responded to a perceived call of God.
4. Relate your calling to your understanding of a personal mission in life and how this connects to the mission of God.

#### **February 11: 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 18: 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 25: A Theological Perspective on Vocation and Call.**

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

**Reading:** 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 4: Mission**

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 five chapters.)

1 Cor. 12, 13

**Group Assignment:** "Out of the comfort zone" worship cross cultural worship experience report due on this date.

**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 ordained and salaried 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 2 for Module I.

**Paper due: March 11. This paper represents 10% of your final grade.**



## **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 11, 18, 25.

### 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 Holy Spirit and develop a plan for the process of growth in a life of personal and social holiness.

### **March 11: 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 18: 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 25: Spring Break**

### **April 1: 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  
Rediger: Beyond the Scandals:

### **Means of Evaluation for Module 2: “In-Process” Position Paper #2 – Due**

**April 8.** ( See means of evaluation and requirements on page 3.) **This paper represents 15% of your final grade**



### **Module 3: Commitment to a vision for ministry.**

The purpose of this module is to help you create a vision for future ministry and understand the commitments necessary to realize this vision. April 1, 8, 15.

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.
5. Integrate all ten points of the matrix for a vocation of ministry.

### **April 8: Formulating a vision for 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 15: Commitments**

This class is an examination of personal, social and institutional commitments you are willing to make in order to live a life of Christian 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 22: Ministry**

This class will be about the various forms of ministry that seminarians may choose to fulfill their calling.

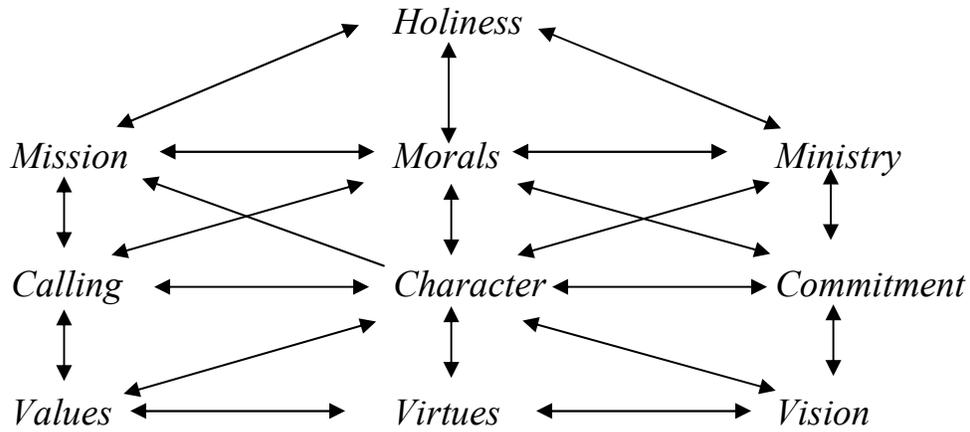
**Reading:** Stevens, *The Other Six Days*, chapters 6-7, 9 and epilogue

### **April 29: Holiness of Heart and Life**

This class will incorporate all previous sessions to bring us to the purpose of our call, the creation of a life of personal and social holiness so that we may participate in God's mission to the world. Dr. Harper will meet with the class for a special service of prayer for sanctification.

**Reading:** Drury, *Holiness For Ordinary People*.

**Means of Evaluation for Module 3: "In-Process" Position Paper #3 – Due May, 6.** You will write an 8-10 page major position paper on your vocation of ministry. This paper will integrate all class material to date, including the DISC assessment instrument. 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 matrix below to conceptualize the subjects of this class that need to be integrated. (See previous pages for guidelines and the grading rubric for the means of assessment). **Remember that this paper represents 20% of your final grade.**



**May 6:** Covenant Discipleship groups will give a creative project presentation. A composite format, on 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 13:** The last day of class: Group presentations, evaluations and “Fiesta”

**May 20:** No class, no final exam.