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IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

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Course: IS502 O1 (SP 2009)
Title: Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry
Hours: 3.00
Published: Yes, on 01/08/2009
Prerequisites: None

Department: Integrative Studies
Faculty: Dr. Burrell Dinkins

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Office: FC
SPO:

Meetings:
On Friday, 02/27/2009 from 1:00p to 5:00p in EXLEXL.
On Saturday, 02/28/2009 from 8:00a to 4:30p in EXLEXL.
On Friday, 03/27/2009 from 1:00p to 5:00p in EXLEXL.
On Saturday, 03/28/2009 from 8:00a to 4:30p in EXLEXL.
On Friday, 04/24/2009 from 1:00p to 5:00p in EXLEXL.
On Saturday, 04/25/2009 from 8:00a to 4:30p in EXLEXL.

Maximum Registration: 50
Catalog 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.

Objectives:

Asbury Theological Seminary
IS-502 Vocation of Ministry
Spring Semester 2009
Orlando Campus

Classes meet: February 27-28, March 27-28, April 24-25
Time: Friday classes: 1:00-5:00
Saturday classes 8:00-12:00, 1:00-4:30

Professor:
Burrell Dinkins, Th.D.
E-mail: burrell.dinkins@asburyseminary.edu
Home phone: 404-373-3220
Office hours: only by phone or E-mail

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.

Course Symbol
Please download the “Matrix of Vocation” symbol and use it as your screen saver during the semester you take this course. You can find it in our virtual classroom.

Mode of Instruction
The class will be taught using these modes of instruction: (a) covenant discipleship groups that will assist your reflections and spiritual formation; (b) lecture, textbook reading, writing and class discussion.

Means of Student Evaluation related to course instruction:
• Attendance at all class sessions is expected. If you are absent for whatever reasons for more than one two-day class sessions, or the equivalent (arriving late or leaving early), you will receive a failing grade for the course. Two late arrivals, or leaving early, will equal an absence.

• By the conclusion of Module 2 you should have attended one worship service in a church that is ethnically different from for 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, communicate with the instructor about ways to adjust this assignment. Write a 1-2 page summary of this worship experience. A hard copy due April 24 (5 % of final grade).

• Spiritual formation is an important part of this course. You are expected to participate in a covenant discipleship group that provides opportunities for fellowship, sharing and prayer, both in class and on-line. Your covenant group will use Keith Drury’s book Holiness for Ordinary People to guide your reflections. The groups are student lead; however, the purpose is mutual sharing and spiritual accountability. This is not a “me teach you” exercise, but a “let’s learn together as members of covenant group. Include a brief summary of your experience in the covenant group and submit this report along with your Module III paper by May 11. Some meeting time is built into our regular class sessions. If you miss more than two class sessions or fail to communicate electronically for two consecutive weeks, you will not receive credit for this component of the course. At the end of 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. (15% of final grade).

• You will participate in the 4-8 hour social justice project before the end of Module II. Each student will select a service/mission project and wherever possible, invite others in your community of faith to participate with you. The project must involve 4-6 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, work for a soup kitchen, help out at social service agency, do housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person. Each student will submit a one page personal report that describes the service experience. A hard copy of your report is due in class March, 27. (10% of final grade)

• The reading requirement for this course is a minimum of 1500 pages, except for international students with English as a second language. 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. The reading report is due when you submit module III paper by May 11. (15% of final grade).

2. “In-Process” Paper
You will prepare a four-five page “in-process” personal, paper that integrates and cross-references the first three subjects 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 your calling. In this 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 about your 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 to the world? Include an assessment of yourself in light of the results from taking the DISC instrument. 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 by using such words as: “we,” “you,” “us,” “they” or “them.”

Your papers should be numbered with double spaced lines. Use one-inch margins and 12 cpi fonts. Document your sources in the body of the paper, for example, (Guinness, 30). Give the bibliographical information at the end of your paper. (Review the grading rubric posted in the virtual classroom before you write this and the next paper.) The first reflection paper is due to be posted in the virtual classroom by March 9. (10% of final grade).

3. Module II “In Process” Paper: You will write a personal five-six page integrative “in process” paper on the first seven subjects 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 a viewpoint that demonstrates your understanding of character formation, Christian virtues and ethical moral behavior. Include an answer to the question: how can a life of personal and social holiness help develop 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. Due April 6 (20% of final grade).

3. Module III “In Process” paper: You will write a seven-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 theme of the paper should be: “My vision for a life of ministry.” 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?”

Your evaluation will be based 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 “Matrix of a Vocation for Ministry.” 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 may 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 May 11. (This paper represents 25% of the final grade.)

A Matrix of a Vocation for Ministry

Holiness

Mission Morals Ministry

Calling Character Commitment

Values Virtues Vision

Required Texts

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. Protect your
character and your integrity.

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 about incomplete grades.

Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines

1. At the first day of class, you will be placed in a Covenant Discipleship Group of 3-4 persons. Teamwork and spiritual formation is an important part of this course. I have also built time into the class schedule for group work to facilitate face-to-face communication; however, you will need to communicate by E-mail between class sessions.

2. The groups will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the remainder of the semester the groups will focus primarily on the book: Holiness for Ordinary People and the ten subjects of the matrix that unite the essence of this course. Each of these units should be related to, and integrated into the tenth subject, 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, though not on an equal basis. At the conclusion of each session a leader will be chosen to lead at the next session, and between class sessions.

4. Folders will be on each table to receive and return student papers. Mark your name and attendance on the folder. Please note that if you miss more than one two-day session 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.

Class Schedule


Goals:
At the completion of module one 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.

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.

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 by writing a one-page list of your core values. Answer the question: how do my values relate to how I got to seminary and how my values will guide my future ministry? Develop a group plan for reading and sharing the chapters of the book: Holiness for Ordinary People during this semester.

Part 2: A Theological Perspective on Vocation and Call.
The focus of our discussions will be 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 calling. 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.

Reading: It is very important that you come to class prepared for class and small group discussions by completing all reading assignments before each class session.

Guinness, Ch. 1-22. (This book was written to be read, or listened to, one chapter per day; however, read, or listen to, all the chapters before the first day of class.)
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 are you prepared to dedicate yourself to a life of holiness?

DISC: You will receive instructions by E-mail on how to take the DISC inventory. Please complete this instrument, print the results and bring all pages of the printout to class. If you come unprepared you will miss a major part of this class session.

Part 3: Mission
To complete module one we will discuss the importance of calling for all of God’s people to participate in His mission to the world and how we are to be 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

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 9. This paper represents 10% of your final grade.

March: 27-28: Module II: 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:

Module II 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.

Part 4: Christian Virtues
This session 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.

Part 5: 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 6-11

Covenant Group Focus: Share with the group what you perceive to be your character traits. Discuss the literature read for this class.

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: Rediger: Beyond the Scandals:

Means of Evaluation for Module 2: “In-Process” Position Paper #2. Due April 6. (See means of evaluation and requirements on page 3.) This paper represents 20% of your final grade
April, 24-25: 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.

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.

Part 7: Formulating a vision for a vocation of ministry
In this class session we will focus on 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.

Part 8: Commitments
This session 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.


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

Part 9: Ministry
This session 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

Part 10: Holiness of Heart and Life
This session 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.

Reading: Drury, Holiness for Ordinary People.

Means of Evaluation for Module 3: “In-Process” Position Paper #3. You will write a nine to ten page 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). Due May 11. (This paper represents 25% of your final grade.)

Holiness
Mission Morals Ministry
Calling Character Commitment
Values Virtues Vision

(The professor reserve the right to change this syllabus until the first day of class. The reading assignments will not change.)