1-1-2003

SM 711 712 Senior Closure

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Recommended Citation
http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/1675

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SM 711/712 Senior Closure

A senior reflection group for students in the MA program in Christian Education or Youth Ministries, with the objective of facilitating an integrative closure to the Seminary experiences and aiding the student in the formulation of an inclusive theory of ministry.

Goals and Objectives: Participants will:

Goal I: Develop and strengthen relationships with each other and with God.
Students will affirm and support each other through sharing their seminary spiritual life journey, fellowship, and acts of Christian community.

Goal II: Continue to gain a better understanding of themselves and their vocation.
Students will reflect on what they have learned about themselves, their gifting for ministry, and areas of needed growth.
Students will develop a list of questions regarding their first year in ministry.
Students will develop spiritual, intellectual, personal, and vocational goals for their first year in ministry, with beginning projections for year two and beyond.
Students will prepare a resume.
Students will continue in their ministry placement.

Goal III: Continue the process of integration.
Students will reflect on and respond to a given case study, demonstrating their ability to integrate and apply in a ministry setting insights from various fields of study.
Students will write a theology of ministry.

Assignments

Attendance: Seminar attendance and participation is required. Any unavoidable absences are to be discussed with the professor.

Reading: Read Working the Angles by Eugene H. Peterson. Note due dates on the Reflection Group Schedule. Each week bring one key thought related to Working the Angles to share in your group discussion.

Supervised Ministry: You will continue to invest 3-5 hours per week in your supervised ministry placement. The goal for this final semester is to develop leadership and planning skills by providing leadership in your placement and by mentoring a volunteer, working with him or her in ministry. These goals should be reflected in the Learning Contract, due February 26.
You will continue to:
Interact every other week with your on site supervisor.
Receive feedback and evaluation from the field supervisor once each month.
Mid-term reflections on the supervised ministry are due March 19 and final evaluation reports are due May 14.
**Reflections:** Prior to each group meeting, reflect on the scripture passage and the question(s) noted for the class session. Record insights and come prepared to share your reflections.

**Devotional Leadership:** Each participant will lead a **15-minute** devotional time during one class session. The focus of the devotion will be the passage from John designated for that day. Involve group members in the processing of the passage, and also share personal insights. To provide constructive feedback, each devotional leader will be evaluated, on the following criteria.
- Skill in leading interactive discovery
- Ability to lead participants in discovering insights meaningful for their lives
- Appropriate use of the biblical passage
- Use of creative methods
- Ability to provide a meaningful experience within the time allotted.

**Resume:** Prepare a resume. **Due: March 12.**

**Theology of Ministry:** Prepare a paper in which you develop your theology of ministry following the instructions provided on pages 4-6. **Submit 2 copies. Due: April 2.**

**Case Study:** Respond to a case study. Based on what you have learned from the social sciences, Bible, and theology, identify the key issues in the case and describe how you would minister in that situation. The case study and further instructions will be distributed later in the semester. **Submit 2 copies. Due: April 30.**

**Goals:** In a brief paper outline your ministry, professional, and personal goals for your first year in ministry. Identify additional goals that would be part of a five-year plan. Include a devotional covenant to guide your spiritual discipline during your first year in ministry. **Due: May 7.**

**Preparing for Ministry Experience:** You will invest an additional 5-6 hours in some activity or set of activities that you believe will best assist you in preparing for ministry. Options will be discussed in the reflection group. Report **Due: May 14.**

**Reflection Group Schedule**

- February 12 – Getting Started
- February 19 – No Class
- February 26 - Working the Angles  
  John 13:18-30  
  What experiences in your life have been particularly formative, in a positive or negative way?  
  **Read: Working the Angles – Introduction**  
  **Due: S.Min. Learning Contract**
- March 5 - Finding a Place of Ministry  
  John 13:31-38
What have been the significant elements in your spiritual pilgrimage while in seminary? What have you learned about yourself, God, others, or ministry?

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 1

**March 12 - Defining the Job**
- *John 14:1-14*
- What joys and challenges do you find in prayer? What insights from *Working the Angles* were most helpful?

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 2

**Due:** Resume

**March 19 - Theological Foundations for Ministry**
- *John 14:15-31*
- Discuss the concept of Sabbath from *Working the Angles*

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 3

**Due:** S.Min. Mid-term Reflections

**March 26 - Reflections on Ministry – Panel of Guests**
- *John 15:1-17*
- What significance for ministry do you see in your Myers/Briggs profile or other personality assessments?

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 4

**April 2 - Theology of Ministry**
- *John 15:18-16:4*
- What gifts do you believe God has entrusted to you?

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 5

**Due:** Theology of Ministry Paper

**April 7-11 – Reading Week**

**April 16 - The First Year in Ministry - Goal Setting**
- *John 16:5-16*
- What gifts do you see in other group members?

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 6

**April 23 – Strategies for Reaching Goals**
- *John 16:17-33*
- What devotional practices have been most meaningful to you? What devotional resources have been most helpful?

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 7

**April 30 – Issues in Ministry**
- *John 17:1-5*

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 8

**Due:** Case Study

**May 7 – Open Agenda**
- *John 17:6-19*

**Read:** *Working the Angles* – Chapter 9

**Due:** Goals

**May 12 or 14 – Wrap Up and Covenant Service**
- *John 17:20-26*
What are the experiences through which you have grown most while in seminary? What does that suggest about spiritual formation?
What are your deep desires for God's continued work in your life?

Due: Final S.Min. Evaluation
Preparing for Ministry Activity Report
May 19-23 – Individual Conferences

THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY
INTEGRATIVE PAPER
The Assignment

The Theology of Ministry paper is intended to be integrative in nature, calling for you to build bridges between your seminary courses and the practice of ministry. The assignment anticipates that you will evidence the cognitive (intellectual and theoretical), the affective (interpersonal and intrapersonal), imaginative (creative) and volitional (decision making) aspects of your seminary training and that you will be able to apply them to a concrete ministry situation.

The assignment does not require you to do new research, except perhaps in areas where you become aware of knowledge or skill gaps. Rather, you are to draw on what you have learned in seminary and direct that knowledge to a given context in ministry. As preparation for writing the paper you will thus want to review previous course notes and readings as these apply to the content of the paper. The assignment anticipates that you will be able to respond beyond mere instinct, common sense, pragmatics or cultural wisdom, but, rather, out of a body of biblical, theological, theoretical and experiential knowledge which you have gained and internalized.

A case situation is provided as the concrete foil for writing your paper. You are asked not only to report your learning in seminary, but also to demonstrate how you will apply it in a ministry context, thus bridging the theory -- practice spectrum.

The criteria for grading the papers will be: 1) the adequacy of ministry knowledge and skills which is evidenced and, 2) how well these are applied to a ministry situation.

The paper is to be not less than 10 pages, nor more than 15 pages in length, using normal margins and double-spacing and reflecting good literary style.

THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY: THE CASE

Dear ___________________________.
We greatly enjoyed talking with you by phone last week about the possibility of your serving in our congregation as Minister of ___________________________. Your insights and passion for ministry impressed us and you are one of two applicants we would like to interview in person. Someone from the church will contact you about interview dates and travel plans.

In answer to some of your questions, let me give you a few more details about our church. (Note: if you already have a position, or are seriously considering a specific position, discard the following description of the church and replace it with a comparable description of your church.) We have 512 members and averages around 290 in morning worship and 175 in Sunday school. The church is located in a city with a population of 65,000 people. About two miles from the church is a state college and several students and staff members attend the church.

The neighborhood where we carry out our immediate ministry has changed in recent years. Once a thriving middle to upper middle-class neighborhood, about one-half of the former membership has now moved to new subdivisions in the suburbs and only a few of them return to the church for worship on Sundays.

The church sits near the boundary between a solidly middle-class population and a deteriorating area of older homes and businesses. Over the past twenty years the population there has become increasingly lower to lower-middle class, consisting about equally of African Americans, Hispanics and poorer white residents. Several of these folks began to attend the church as a result of the outreach of our new pastor.

Until recently our church remained insulated from the changes going on in its environment, but an increasing sense of discipleship and mission has begun to emerge in the lay leadership of the congregation, responding to the vision of the pastor. We believe we are ready to move!

The lay leadership in the church is generally above average in education and, for the most part, consists of committed Christians. We are sensing, however, the need for a paid staff person to provide volunteers with leadership for their ministries and guidance in deepening their spiritual lives.

The search committee also has some questions for you. We are very interested in your theology of ministry. What are the basic beliefs on which you will base your ministry with us, if you become a member of the pastoral team at our church? On what biblical principles do you base your beliefs about ministry, and what insights from the social sciences have helped form those beliefs? (We understand that in your degree plan at Asbury you have explored both biblical principles and insights from the social sciences.) At the interview, to get a clearer picture of your theology of ministry, we will be asking you to discuss the following questions. We would like to have your thoughts in writing. Please bring with you a paper in which you discuss these questions. Provide us with about 2 pages, double-spaced, in response to each of the questions. If we have not asked about an aspect of your theology that you would like to discuss with us, add that to your paper.
We desire that the educational ministries of our church be truly Christian and sound educationally. As you respond to the following questions, be sure to make clear the biblical/theological foundations for your beliefs, integrating that with insights from the social sciences.

**Disciple Making**
- What do you believe about how people come to new life in Christ and mature in their faith? In the light of these beliefs, how can the ministry of the church be formed to effectively fulfill Christ’s Great Commission to make disciples?

**View of Persons**
- What do you believe about people? How will those beliefs influence your perspectives and interpersonal relationships as you do ministry?

**Teaching**
- What do you believe should be accomplished through the teaching of the church? What does effective teaching look like and where does it take place? In the teaching ministry of the church, what role should be given to the Bible?

**Leadership**
- How would you describe your leadership style and your role in the fulfilling of the mission of the church? What biblical metaphor best pictures how you see yourself as a minister and leader?

**Team Ministry**
- What do you believe about the roles and relationships between yourself in your ministry position, the lay volunteers of the church, and the senior pastor? How can you contribute to the effective functioning of the full team?

**The Faith Community**
- How do you believe the church as a whole, the home, and the area of ministry you will oversee can and should work together for the spiritual formation of those for whom you will be responsible? How might you help these three entities support one another and work together?

Know that members of the search committee are much in prayer for you and for us as we prepare for our time together. We desire to discern God’s will for all of us.

In Christ,
Ted Campbell
Search Committee Chair