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IR 700 Senior Reflection Seminar

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WELCOME!

Welcome to your Senior Reflection Seminar. I am looking forward to participating with you this semester. I have led these seminars for many years on campus. But this is a different method and I will really miss being with each of you in a face-to-face setting. This is my third time to offer this seminar over the Internet. Since IR 700 is part of the former curriculum, this may be the last time it will be offered. Consequently, I invite you to join me in this experience and be open to help me make it meaningful for each of us. One of the blessings I have received over the years at ATS from this seminar is the sharing of our personal stories and vision for ministry.

Since all of you will be asked to share some personal history, let me begin with a few bits of information about myself. I came to Asbury in 1975 and taught in the Department of Pastoral Ministry for 25 years. Prior to my faculty position I served four years as a production supervisor for Parker Seale Co., two years as a mental health Chaplain, and a pastor for 10 years. I retired from Asbury Seminary on July 1, 2000 to care for my wife’s illness. Janet has an incurable brain disease that has progressively shut down her control of any muscles. Last semester (2002) I was asked to "pinch hit" for Dr. Thomas, Director of Supervised Ministry, while he was on sabbatical. I thoroughly enjoyed being back on campus for three mornings.

My spiritual journey is rooted in my parent’s faith and prayers for me through a life threatening accident at the age of three. My commitment to Christ and call to the ministry came in my eighteenth year. As you too can testify, I could never have guessed what God was going to do with my life. As we say on campus, “God is Good! All the Time!” My years at Asbury were a time of learning about and experiencing God’s wonderful grace. That continues today! I believe this seminar will provide you that experience as well.

A PERSONAL REQUEST:

Since graduation is near for all of you, I want us to covet to pray “one for another.” You will learn the names of those in this seminar by going to the classroom. In addition, during the first week you will be assigned to a team. These teams are set up to function like collegial sharing and consulting groups. Later in this syllabus you will be given
more information about the use of these teams. Though we may not be able to see each other, that doesn’t mean we can’t be supportive for each other. So learn with me how across the electronic channels of our life we can share with each other the grace and love of God that abounds in our lives. Let’s share our celebrations and concerns.

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION:

This seminar is designed to be taken during your final semester at Asbury Theological Seminary. It seeks to integrate your seminary experiences of spiritual, intellectual and vocational formation with your personal views of ministry and your life experiences. **The central project of this seminar is the preparation of a “Theology of Ministry” paper.** This paper is to be the culmination of your understanding of ministry related to four areas. The final section of this paper will include the application of your theological and theoretical vision and understanding to a case. This seminar is also designed to share your spiritual journey and to celebrate with your colleagues their journey. This seminar seeks to foster a measure of closure to your academic development and personal experiences while at seminary.

TEAM COMPONENT:

Members in this seminar will be assigned to a team. These team assignments are posted in the online classroom IR700XL-VT. The purpose of the teams is to provide opportunity for sharing with a small group. These teams are to function like a collegial consulting group and as a sharing group. Since we are not in the same room this will give each member opportunity to draw from other members their thoughts and ideas related to the written assignments. Read carefully the assignments and the role of team sharing and follow the directions. I believe you will quickly come to appreciate your team members.

SEMINAR EVALUATION:

This two-hour credit only seminar is part of the Supervised Ministry grading policy. There are two possible final grades – Credit (CR) or Credit/No Credit (CR/NC). A CR/NC would only be given when a student has not completed the assignments. For those graduating in May 2003, a CR/NC could mean a delay in their graduation. I do not expect any member of this seminar to be given a CR/NC grade. However, unexpected circumstances do arise. A CR/NC results in a growth plan to fulfill the incomplete aspects or other concerns. A growth plan is to be developed two weeks after the semester and completed before the fall semester begins. If you find that happening, please contact me immediately and I will work with you to help you meet the requirements of this seminar. Completion of the requirements on time, as described later, fulfills the assigned two-hour credit.
This seminar is really more like an independent study. The difference being that you will not be alone. Thus, you will be responsible to your team members. Much like your own boss. Oh yes, I will be checking in, like a congregation does with their pastor or a conference/district official or some other person that one may be accountable to. Thus, once you begin this seminar I assume you will meet the due dates and fulfill the requirements without having to be reminded. As you know, that's "the real world."

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Two reflection papers will be prepared and shared with your team members. These papers will be reflections of your spiritual journey and other related personal experiences. One will be prepared at the beginning and the other near the close of this seminar.

The **FIRST one is due February 14th** and is to cover your spiritual journey before enrolling at Asbury. It is to be a two to three-page (maximum) summary, single spaced with double space between paragraphs. Prepare it in a first person conversational style of writing. You will then send it to your team folder (teams to be assigned the first week) for their reading and response.

The following is provided to help you prepare this reflection paper:

**REFLECTIONS ON MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

**A Witness to God’s Grace**

**Before Asbury**

*Often persons come to seminary and leave with few opportunities to share their spiritual journey with others or to hear others share theirs. Sharing our spiritual story is one way we honor God for His love and to give witness to His grace and forgiveness. Using the following suggestions prepare a three-page summary of your life before arriving at Asbury.*

- note significant events, persons and experiences
- reflect upon important scriptures, worship experiences, preaching, witnesses of other persons, etc.
- revisit any struggles that were significant turning points in your life of faith
- identify when, where and/or what ways you have experienced God’s grace

Send your reflections to your team folder by **February 14th**. Read those you receive and respond with your thoughts and observations to each other. These responses need not be more than a ½ page long. Respond by **February 21st**.

The **SECOND reflection paper** is due at the close of this seminar – **May 9th**. This is to be a two page reflection on your time at Asbury. Review your experiences while studying at seminary and write about those important experiences. Follow the
style of the first reflection paper. Here are some suggestions:

**REFLECTIONS ON MY SEMINARY EXPERIENCE**
*A Witness to God's Preparation and Leading*

**During Asbury**

Seminary preparation is a significant part of your faith journey and preparation for future ministry. As you think about your years at Asbury identify some of the important experiences, insights, etc. that you take with you.
- may want to describe a chapel or an incident that you will often remember
- maybe there was something you learned or an insight that you gained
- perhaps some skill was developed
- some important change or growth that you experienced

Send your reflections to your team folder by **May 9th**. Read those you receive and respond with your thoughts and observations to each other. These responses need not be more than a ½ page long. Respond by **May 16th**.

**A Theology of Ministry paper will be due May 2nd.** All graduating seniors enrolled in IR700 are required to prepare this paper. No grade is given. A (blind) random selection from all of these papers will be reviewed by a group of faculty as part of the seminary’s accreditation requirements. The papers are anonymous to the faculty evaluators.

The schedule provided later gives dates for a process for preparing this paper and for times to consult with one another as a means to enhance your final thinking. This paper is not to be viewed as another research paper. You develop your views and thinking, describe your views of ministry, and apply them to the case (found in the course room). The team component is where you share ideas with your team and they with you. Use whatever you learn from your team members in your final paper. Here is your opportunity to express your understanding of ministry, share that with your team, and take what you learn from each other and add it to your final draft. As you prepare this paper draw upon classes you had, experiences you remember, biblical material that comes to mind, etc. References that have been especially useful need to be identified and may be done so in the body of the paper. Though this is not a research paper, identifying references will demonstrate to the faculty evaluators that you have integrated some of what you have learned. This is really a "work in progress." If you were to write this again after 5 years it would be a more developed description of your growth. Remember to think theologically as well as philosophically, etc.

In a second section of this paper you will apply your thinking and views to a case. This “Theology of Ministry” paper is to be your integration of your theological understanding and personal thinking about ministry. What informs your views of ministry? What are the theological foundations that will shape how you approach ministry?
practical applications of your views about ministry? Also include your thoughts about the following topics: the concept of family, theodicy, ecclesiology (the role and mission of the church), and outreach to people on life's margins.

Thus, after you have developed your theological understanding and views about ministry in the first section, you will then apply them to a case situation in the second section.

To guide you in this application endeavor you are to focus on four dimensions of ministry listed at the end of the case.
- Socio-political-cultural
- Pastoral care
- Educational
- Leadership

The following format is suggested for the final draft. Use it, modify it, or create your own. Whatever format or outline you use, make it evident in the paper. Though you may not be preparing for a pastoral position, for this paper, picture yourself as the pastor of the church described in the case. Prepare this paper as if you were going to share its contents with some official group of this church. Meeting with these members is for the purpose of providing them your views and vision for ministry.

Part I Theoretical/Theological Discussion

In this opening section develop your thinking and understanding as it relates to the concept of the family, the role and mission of the church, outreach to people on the margins and express your theological understanding of the four dimensions listed in the case. Here is where you draw upon your experience, thinking, courses completed, and other studies related to these topics. Develop this section as if you were going to share your views and vision with a congregation. Begin with a short introduction then develop you theology and thinking related to ministry in the four areas listed above. Remember to think theologically. Hold any specific application to the case for the second section.

Part II Integration and Application

Using the case information, draw from Part I of this paper to address the issues in this situation. Cover the four dimensions as they are evident in this case. You may want to make some assumptions about the facts. When you do make assumptions state why you have made them. In this part of the paper you are to show how you integrate your theological/theoretical understanding with the practical situation of the case. Show how what you believe in Part I shapes the way you would approach the case issues. Again, imagine yourself as the pastor of this church and describe how you would minister to this situation.
Additional guidelines and suggestions for the “Theology of Ministry” Paper.

This paper is to be from 12 to 15 pages in length, using normal margins, double-spacing, and using good literary style. Use 12-point type.

If you choose to use quotes, Scripture references, or other references place them in the body of the paper where they are found. If you do quote from books, articles, etc. list the full titles of them in a bibliography page at the end of the paper.

Do not put your name on the pages in the paper, but type a cover page with your name, course number, and my name. Place it at the front of the paper submitted. This is not a research paper. Rather it is to be your thinking and understanding about what ministry is, based upon your theological and theoretical beliefs. So draw upon your opinions, experiences, relevant classes, readings and training.

Again, prepare it as if you are going to use it to present your beliefs (Part I) to a congregation and then in Part II how you will work with the situation in the case.

To assist you in preparing this paper, summaries of your theological/theoretical beliefs and understandings about the four dimensions of the case will be prepared and shared with your team members. These summaries are working notes that you prepared for use in the development of your “Theology of Ministry” paper. Sharing them with your team will give you a chance to get feedback and to read what your colleagues are thinking. This type of peer consulting is designed so you can dialog with other members and draw from each other’s thinking and ideas and thus, add what you learn from others to your final paper. Here is a time when sharing and using other's thinking is encouraged.

WORKING WITH THE ELECTRONIC PROCESS:

Send messages to me by email: Fred_Van_Tatenhove@asburyseminary.edu For personal messages use fvantate@juno.com You can also reach me by phone - (859) 885-7659

You will also use email to communicate with your colleagues. Send your reflection papers to your team folder. Your shorter responses to each other’s materials may be included in email messages.

Your “Theology of Ministry” paper should be mailed (the old fashion way) to me at: Asbury Theological Seminary Fred Van Tatenhove SPO 204 N. Lexington Avenue Wilmore, KY 40390

Be sure it is post-marked by the due date - May 2. Also put your name only on the cover page.
My plan is to check my email on a regular basis, like every other day. I will respond to them in the order they were sent. If you are facing a problem with a deadline let me know immediately. Use my alternate email fvantate@juno.com or phone me. Meeting the due dates is part of the requirement for credit. In addition your material is submitted as part of the collegial sharing process of this seminar. Note: I will open each team folder, read the papers, make some observations, and give some feedback. Responses will be limited to each team for their review. If I have something to communicate to everyone, that will be posted in the discussion center.

EXL SUPPORT TEAM

The following persons are the ExL experts. When I am in trouble with the mechanics, they are the ones I go to. You will find them to be most helpful.

Technical difficulties contact Andy Adams, ExL_Support@asburyseminary.edu
Related to the ExL program, contact
Kevin Osborn, ExL_Director@asburyseminary.edu or
Amy Jo Adams, ExL_Coach@asburyseminary.edu
Library issues, contact Hannah Kirsch, Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu

LIBRARY MATERIALS AND REFERENCE ASSISTANCE

All ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library; however, if such services are unavailable or inadequate, ExL students may also obtain library books and journal articles through the mail from Asbury Theological Seminary's B. L. Fisher Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be emailed to the ExL Reference Librarian, Hannah Kirsch (Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu). Hannah is also available to assist ExL students with reference requests such as how to find citations for books and articles, how to use the various online databases available to ExL students, or how to begin looking for information on a specific topic.

To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library's WebPac (online catalog of the library's holdings) or one of the journal databases available on the ExL Virtual Library webpage (found in the Resource Center of your ExL classroom). Then send an email to Hannah citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to ask. Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) and the cost of shipping. Express mail services (price varies according to weight) and faxing ($1.50 for the first page and 25 cents for each additional page plus photocopy charges) are also available, but material will generally take 1-2 days from the receipt of the request to be processed.

Plan ahead and make your requests early.
To order textbooks or for textbook information contact: (There are no texts for this seminar, you are the text.)

Asbury Bookstore
1-866-855-8252 (toll-free)
exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu

WINDOWS AND ICONS

While I am sure that each of you are aware of the intended use of each of the items which appear in the IR700XL folder, let me summarize the manner in which I intend to use them this semester:

The **Course Center** will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The **Discussion Center** will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and me, you should post to the Discussion Center.

The **IR700X Office** is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly.

The **Archives Center** will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The **Chat Center** is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. 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.

The **Resource Center** provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL 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 (which you can use to view my overheads) as well as a Real Audio player. I encourage you to take advantage of all these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary's on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE AND MODULE OUTLINES:

The following modules are to be completed as indicated. Details related to each assignment in the modules can be found in previous sections. If you have any questions, email me or call if needed.

**Module 1**
Review the syllabus, read the case, and submit any questions to me. First reflection paper due in your team folder – Friday February 14th. Team members responses to other member's papers - due February 21st.

Module 2
Prepare two to three pages of notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about Socio-Political-Culture aspects of ministry. Address issues about the role of the church in culture, family, the marginal in society, and ethnic concerns. Send your notes to members in your team for their review and response. Due February 28th.

Team members responses to other member's papers - due March 7th.

Module 3
Prepare two to three pages of notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about Pastoral Care aspects of ministry. Address mission of care giving, role of lay care, giving, and other aspects like the meaning of incarnation in care giving. Send your notes to members in your team for their review and response. Due March 14th.

Team members responses to other member's papers - due March 21st.

Module 4
Prepare two to three pages of notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about Educational aspects of ministry. Address issues related to the overall role of the church’s responsibility to education. Send your notes to members in your team for their review and response. Due March 28th.

Team members responses to other member's papers - due April 4th.

Module 5
Prepare two to three pages of notes on your theological/theoretical beliefs about Leadership aspects of ministry. Address the role of leadership from the pastoral and laity perspective. How is administration part of the mission? Send your notes to members in your team for their review and response. Due April 11th.

Team members responses to other member's papers - due April 18th.

Module 6
NOTE: “Theology of Ministry” paper postmarked and mailed by May 2nd.

Module 7
Final reflection paper is due in your team folder May 9th.
Team members responses to other member's papers - due May 16th.

Congratulations! You have finished all your requirements for credit. For some of you, graduation is next.