

1-1-2005

IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

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IS502 Vocation of Ministry.doc

Name: IS502 Vocation of Ministry.doc

Subject: Martyn/Voigts

Category:

Abstract:

Keywords:

Attachments:

IS502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry
Fall Semester 2005
3 Semester Units
Wednesday 1:00 – 3:45 p.m. M. 202
Anticipated Class Enrollment: 50 Students

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Course 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 a life of holiness and vocational service.

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 church and world) from a Wesleyan perspective;
2. Grasp the relationship between critical reasoning and spirituality and understand their importance for theological reflection on the vocation and practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, and gender issues with regard to their importance for the vocation of ministry;
4. Understand the importance of moral formation and integrity for Christian ministry, with a clear understanding of 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 into God's ministry; and
7. Construct a ***Rule of Life*** document that sets the spiritual compass for life and ministry.

Modes of Instruction

This class will be taught using three modes of instruction: (1st) We will meet together as one large group for some levels of instruction and interaction; (2nd) 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 (3rd) the discipleship groups will engage in assigned projects to provide direct experience in selected course components.

Means of Student Evaluation

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 1:00pm and end at 3:45pm.

1. Write a 4 to 5 page (12 point font, double spaced, 1" margins all around) Spiritual Autobiography in which you highlight your spiritual journey to this point **(5 points)**. **Due September 21.** [Please note: your Spiritual Autobiography will go into your portfolio.]
2. By the conclusion of Module 1 attend one worship service in a church that is ethnically different from yours **(5 points)**. Include a one-page summary report of your church visit with your module one paper. **Due October 5.**
3. 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 led. Meeting time is built into our regular class period. 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 **(Up to 5 points)**.
4. Participate in a 4-hour social justice project with your covenant discipleship group before the end of Module 2.

Each Covenant Discipleship Group will select a service/mission project. The project is to be completed **AS A GROUP** and must involve a minimum of 4 hours of service outside the Asbury Seminary community. For example, your group can serve dinner at the Ronald McDonald House in Lexington, work for a soup kitchen, help out at God's Pantry, serve a meal at the UK Wesley Foundation, work at Nathaniel Mission, provide housekeeping or lawn care for a homebound person, etc. The group is to document 1) the attendance of each member, 2) the nature of the project, 3) a group statement of 1 or 2 paragraphs describing how this chosen project is understood theologically as an expression of the group's participation in the Kingdom of God, and 4) a group statement about what 3 aspects of the experience stand out for them as significant. **This project is due November 2 (5 points).**

5. The reading requirement for this course is a minimum of 1200 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, (up to 20 points).

6. "In-Process" Paper, Module 1

Please prepare a four to five page "in-process" personal paper that integrates and cross-references the first four weeks of the matrix (values, calling, mission and holiness) from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments. The central theme of the paper is: **"My Call to Ministry."** 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. Please Note: This paper should include an answer to the question: how can growth in personal and social holiness help me fulfill my calling?

In this class your papers are personal reflections. They should be written with first person pronouns without an attempt at preaching to others.

[Your paper should use one-inch margins and 12-point fonts and be double-spaced. Document your sources within the body of the paper, for example (Lewis, 45). Use a "Works Cited" page at the end of your paper (see the sample paper for an example).]

Module 1 "In Process" paper due (Up to 15 points).

7. "In Process" paper Module 2

For the Module 2 "In Process" paper please write a personal five to six page integrative paper on the first seven weeks of the course content from the readings, lectures, class discussions and assignments for modules 1 and 2. The central theme of this paper will be: **"Integrity In Ministry."** Write from the four points of the matrix on virtues, character, morals and holiness. Include an answer to the question: **How can a life of personal and social holiness help develop a life of integrity?** Review the writing instruction for

Module 1. Include new material from the first four points of the matrix in Module 1 (material 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.

Module 2 “In Process” paper is due November 2 (up to 20 points).

<i>Holiness</i>	
<i>Mission</i>	<i>Morals</i>
<i>Calling</i>	<i>Character</i>
<i>Values</i>	<i>Virtues</i>

8. Module 3 “Rule of Life” paper

Please write an eight page personal integrative paper that cross-references all class material to date in modules 1, 2, and 3. The purpose of this assignment is to help you create and support a “Rule of Life” that will help set the compass for your life and ministry.

Your specific “Rule of Life” must not be longer than one page (Examples will be distributed). The remaining seven pages will both add support to your rule as well as demonstrate a thorough integration of the course materials into your personal life.

Be sure to 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 status and 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.

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 1 and 2. Do not just list words from the various units of study. Review the writing instructions in Module 1 and the grading rubric guidelines (hand-outs) before writing your paper. The completion of this document will allow you to meet a graduation requirement of constructing a “Rule of Life” paper; and it 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.

Module 3 “In Process” integration paper is due December 7 (up to 25 points).

*A Matrix of a Vocation of Ministry
Holiness*

<i>Mission</i>	<i>Morals</i>	<i>Ministry</i>
<i>Calling</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Commitment</i>
<i>Values</i>	<i>Virtues</i>	<i>Vision</i>

Required Textbooks

Bernard of Clairvaux (1995) On Loving God. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, (219 pages).

Foster, Richard J. (1998) Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth. San Francisco: Harper, (228 pages).

Grenz, Stanley and Roy D. Bell (2001) Betrayal of Trust: Sexual Misconduct in the Pastorate. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity

Press, (213 pages).

Groothuis, Rebecca Merrill. (1997) Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality. Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Books, (266 pages).

Guinness, Os (2003) The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, (292 pages).

Muto, Susan and van Kaam, Adrian (1994) Divine Guidance: Seeking To Find and Follow the Will of God. Pittsburgh, PA: Epiphany Books, (206 pages).

Sire, James W. (2000) Habits of the Mind: Intellectual Life as a Christian Calling. Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, (263 pages).

Wesley, John. (1977) A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1777 (119 pages).

Recommended Textbooks

Clouse, Bonnidell and Robert Clouse (1989) Women In Ministry: Four Views. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, (250 pages).

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth; Kang, S. Steve; Parrett, Gary A. (2004) A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic (224 pages).

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

Stevens, R. Paul. (1999) The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective. Vancouver, British Columbia: Eerdmans/Regent, (289 pages).

Willimon, William H. (2000) Calling & Character: virtues of the

Ordained Life. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, (182 pages).

Grading and Evaluation

- A (94 and above) Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.
- A- (90-93)
- B+ (87-89)
- B (84-86) Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives.
- B- (80-83)
- C+ (77-79)
- C (74-76) Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives.
- C- (70-73)
- D+ (67-69)
- D (64-66) Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives.
- D- (60-63)
- F Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Grading for the class will follow a simple 100-point system.

Late Papers

A one-point deduction in grade will be assessed for every day 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 due date.

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. Please know that incompletes are seldom given and see the ATS Catalog for further clarification.

Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines

1. During the first week of class, students will be placed in

Covenant Discipleship Groups of 4-6 persons. Because teamwork and spiritual formation is an important part of this course, time will be built into every weekly session for group work together in a Covenant Discipleship format.

2. The groups will meet for one introductory meeting, then for the remainder of the semester the groups will focus on the nine dimensions that tie this course together. Every small group session should be explicitly focused upon holiness of heart and life (personally and socially), both as a gift from God, and as a personal responsibility. Group members are expected to contribute biblical references, resources from reading and personal experiences that are directly related to the topic of discussion for that day.
3. Each group will be student led and leadership will be shared among all group members. At the conclusion of each session another group member will be assigned to lead at the next session.
4. In order to effectively participate in group discussions each group member should read in advance the material to be discussed and complete all written group assignments.
5. Each group should covenant to keep group conversations confidential among group members.

Class Schedule

Module 1: Understanding the Nature of Christian Values and Vocation in the context of God's Mission to the World (September 7, 14, 21, and 28).

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.

September 7: Personal Values That Sustain a Life of Christian Ministry.

This session provides an introduction to the class, organization of small groups and a forum for articulating values and their influences on the call to ministry.

Reading List: Guinness, Chapters 1-7
Muto/van Kaam Chapters 1-3

NOTE: Please read the above before class starts.

Covenant Group Focus: Please 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 will my values guide my future ministry?"

September 14: Calling (The Discernment Process in a Call to Ministry)

Reading List: Guinness, Chapters 1-14
Muto/van Kaam Chapters 4-8

Covenant Group Focus: Please 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 or in dedicating yourself to a life of holiness?

September 21: A Wesleyan Perspective on Vocation and Call (Personal Vocational Strengths, Spiritual Gifts, and their Relationship to Vocation and Call).

Reading: Guinness, Chapters 15-22
Muto/van Kaam Chapters 9-11
Wesley (pages 1-35)

Project Assessment: "DISC" (Please take the DISC instrument before next week's class)

Covenant Group Focus: Please 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.

September 28: Mission (The Importance of Calling for All of God's People)

Reading: Guinness Chapters 23-26
Muto/van Kaam Chapters 12-13
Wesley (pages 36-70)

Covenant Group Focus: First of all please share how Wesleyan discipleship & vocational principles are impacting your life. Then, please share with your covenant group your heart for including all of God's people within the scope of your ministry. Are you still facing some personal prejudicial issues? What are the prejudicial issues you anticipate facing in your ministry setting?

"In Process" position paper #1 due October 5 (15% of grade).

Module 2: The Call to Integrity: Christian Virtues, Character, Morals, and a Life of Holiness (October 5, 12, 19)

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.

October 5: Christian Virtues (Formation of the Heart)

This week will be an introduction to the influence of virtues on Christian integrity.

Reading: Foster Chapters 1-5
Grenz & Bell (read the Preface through chapter 2)
Galatians 5.16-26; 2 Peter 1; 1 Timothy 3.1-7;
Titus 1.5-10

Covenant Group Focus: Please thoroughly discuss Foster's "Inward Disciplines" and how you are specifically doing with each one of them. In addition, please study the suggested scripture lessons and discuss the relationship between virtue, ethics and the fruit of the Spirit. Do you have a plan for growth for personal virtues?

October 12: Calling and Character

This session will focus on the similarities and differences between personality development and character formation for Christian leaders. Please 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: Foster Chapters 6-9
Grenz & Bell Chapters 3-5

Covenant Group Focus: In addition to sharing your list of moral, intellectual and physical virtues and answering the above questions, please discuss how you are doing with Foster's "Outward Disciplines." Also, please share with your group what you perceive to be your character traits.

October 19: Morality in Christian Leadership

This important class 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: Foster Chapters 10-13

Grenz & Bell Chapters 6-8

Covenant Group Focus: Please discuss the Grenz & Bell book and how it relates to you. Include in your discussion your answer to this key question: “*If Satan were to get me down right now, how would he do it?*” Bring Foster into your covenant group by tying in “Confession” to your discussion.

“In Process” position Paper #2 due November 2 (up to 20 points).

Module 3: Commitment To God’s Vision For Ministry (October 26, November 2 & 9).

The purpose of this module is to help you receive God’s vision for future ministry and understand the commitments necessary to realize God’s vision and to prayerfully construct a *Rule of Life*.

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 are being called to.
2. Decide on the commitments you are making to the Lord, others, yourself, and institutions.
3. Formulate a *Rule of Life*.
4. Develop a curricular plan that will help prepare you for the kind of ministry you are called to.
5. Integrate all ten points of the matrix for a vocation of ministry.

October 26: Discernment and Critical Thinking In Ministry

This class will be a discussion of the importance of discernment in receiving a vision for the kind of person you are being called to be and the specific form of ministry you are being called to fulfill. Critical thinking is major component of our Wesleyan heritage.

Reading: Sire Chapters 1-5

Covenant Group Focus: What is your understanding of God’s vision for your ministry? What kind of person do you envision that God wants you to end up being? And what kind of vision does God have

for you in terms of impacting the world for the sake of Christ? It would be wonderful if you could bring a one-paragraph statement answering the above questions. Group members will assist each other in refining their vision of ministry.

November 2: Rule of Life

Will we have a compass that will help set the direction of our everyday fidelity to the Lord or will we merely spiritually drift? In this critical class the ancient example of a ***Rule of Life*** will be covered.

Reading: No required reading for this day.

Covenant Group Focus: Please share with your small group your beginning discernment of what it will mean for you to live a life of ***Devotional Living; Relational Strengthening; and Vocational Service***. This exercise will help you in better articulating your own ***Rule of Life***, which will be handed in as an assignment.

November 9: Commitment and Vocational Fidelity

This class will examine personal, social and institutional commitments you are willing to make in order to live a life of vocational fidelity. Please bring to class a copy of personal commitments you are making to God, others, self, and institutions.

Reading: Sire Chapters 6-10
Bernard (pages 3-18)

Covenant Group Focus: Please share your list of commitments and ask for feedback from your colleagues. Include a discussion of Sire's book, especially his understanding of the connection between intellectual virtues and holiness.

November 16: Ministry

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.

Readings: Groothuis Chapters 1, 2, and 5)
[NOTE: You may substitute Women In Ministry: Four Views edited by
Clouse & Clouse for the Groothuis book]
Bernard (pages 19-31)

READING WEEK NOVEMBER 21 - 25

November 30: Cross Cultural and Gender Issues

Readings: Groothuis Chapters 8 & 9 (or Clouse & Clouse)
Bernard (pages 32-42)

Covenant Group Focus: Please share some of the real issues you may be facing personally or that you anticipate facing within your ministry setting regarding cultural and gender issues. In addition covenant groups will need to finalize plans for their creative presentation project.

“Rule of Life” paper Due December 7.

Please write an 8-page paper, which devotes the first page to stating your **Rule of Life** (your Rule should not completely fill up your first page. White space is a very good thing here!). The remaining 7 pages should both support your **Rule of Life** as well as integrate all class materials to date. This final paper for VOM should help you summarize your vocation of ministry. Use the matrix to conceptualize the subjects of this class that need to be integrated. You will be given up to 25 points for your **Rule of Life** paper.

December 7 “Catch Up” Class Period

No Final Exam Given

Assignments

Assignment	Due Date	Length	Points
Spiritual Autobiography	September 21	4-5 pages	5 points
Mod. 1 Paper	October 5	4-5 pages	15 points
Church Visit	October 5	1 page	5 points
Mod. 2 Paper	November 2	5-6 pages	20 points
Justice Project	November 2	4 hours minimum	5 points
Rule of Life Paper	December 7	8 pages	25 points
Reading Report	December 7	Form	20 points
Group Participation	December 7	Form	5 points