

**Ministry 6301**  
**Introduction to Christian Ministry**

**Instructor: Greg Neill**

**Fall 2019**

**Mondays 7:00 to 9:40 PM**

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**Marble Falls, TX 78654**

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**Available by appointment at AGST on Monday Afternoons  
(in Marble Falls on Tuesdays and Thursdays)**

## **I. Course Goals**

The student will articulate major elements of a coherent Christian worldview and be able to communicate this effectively in a local church or parachurch setting. Specifically, through the successful completion of this course, the student will demonstrate familiarity with the work of a Christian minister in a local context. The student will display a working knowledge and appreciation of the basic theology, attitude and skills necessary for ministry in a local context. This knowledge will be gained through lectures, class discussions, assigned readings and case studies. All this will be supplemented by personal theological reflections, group exercises and drafting a Philosophy/Theology of Ministry. The theme of the course is understanding ministry as serving the church, with an emphasis on equipping others in the church for ministry.

## **II. Course Objectives**

1. The student will be able to clearly articulate and assess an understanding of ministry as a response to the commands to love God and to love neighbor.
2. The student will gain a practical appreciation of ministry that equips others for ministry. The student will be able to clearly articulate and effectively assess how this understanding impacts and clarifies his/her own ministry definition and vocational direction.
3. The student will compare and evaluate a number of different approaches to ministry and different areas of ministerial focus.
4. The student will show a working knowledge of basic pastoral care skills, along with the ability to assess more critical needs.
5. The student will show an understanding of the necessity of spiritual formation.
6. The student will understand the basic dynamics of family systems.
7. The student will exhibit a basic understanding of servant-leadership as modeling, mentoring, equipping, empowering and encouraging.
8. Thus, the student will grasp and apply a model of authority which is “authentically authoritative” rather than autocratic and authoritarian.

### III. Means of Assessment

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Meaningful participation in class discussion | 150 points |
| 2. Reflection papers from assigned readings     | 250 points |
| 3. Case Study Presentation                      | 100 points |
| 4. Rule of Life paper                           | 50 points  |
| 5. Book Review                                  | 200 points |
| 6. Philosophy/Theology of Ministry paper        | 250 points |
| 7. Scale for Final Grades                       |            |
| a. 900-1,000 Points (A)                         |            |
| b. 800-899 Points (B)                           |            |
| c. 700-799 Points (C)                           |            |
| d. 600-699 Points (D)                           |            |
| e. Below 600 – Don't Go There                   |            |

### IV. Explanation of Assessments

All written works must use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Papers must be clearly identifiable with a cover sheet including a title and the student's name, double-spaced twelve-point type with one-inch margins, and must be clear and thorough enough to be useful to classmates. Students will provide the instructor with electronic or hard copies. Papers will be discussed in class.

**Weekly Reflection Papers** will offer theological reflections on the assigned weekly readings. The paper should seek to determine the author's purpose, the theological significance, and the practical application of the reading. The reflection papers are to be 1-2 pages in length. In some cases, students will be given specific prompts for the paper. In addition to the reflections on the assigned readings, students will be asked to submit an outline for a funeral service.

**For the funeral service outline** students will be assigned a hypothetical background for a funeral, such as an elderly church member who passed away from natural causes or a younger person who died because of an accident. Students will create a 1-2 page outline of the service that includes an order of the service, suggested scriptures and different components of the service.

**\*\*\*Students may skip one of the reflection papers with the exception of the funeral outline. Please let the instructor know when this will occur.**

**The case study** will involve analyzing a situation in a church context that requires a pastoral intervention. The analysis will include identifying the components of the family system and suggesting possible interventions to address the situation. The student will present the case study to the class and submit a 4-6 page paper summarizing the specifics of the case, the analysis of the situation and the theological and pastoral rationale for the intervention.

**The Rule of Life Paper** can follow any format that proves most beneficial to your personal spiritual formation. The 1-2 page paper should outline spiritual principles and practices by which the individual seeks to use in future spiritual growth and maturity.

**The Book Review of Dallas Willard's *Hearing God*** will address these kinds of questions: What is the author's thesis and main supporting points? How well and convincingly are the points made; how could they have been better presented? Where do you agree and where do you disagree with the author? What issues does the author fail to address? What is the best sentence or paragraph or chapter in the book? How does this book speak to the work of ministry and especially to your own ministry? The paper should be 5-7 pages in length. The book reviews will be presented in class near the middle of the semester.

**The Philosophy/Theology of Ministry Paper** will clearly and thoughtfully articulate your overall philosophy and theology of ministry; answering the question, "What is ministry, theologically, practically, personally, and communally?" The student should address their particular vision of the specific ministry context to which they are called-- what are your own ministry plans? How does your philosophy/theology of ministry inform and shape those particular plans? Your answers to these questions should interact with your lived experiences, scripture, and key theological principles developed in class and from the reading assignments. Finally, the paper should be "fleshed out" with the practical details which will lead you to an informed and viable job description for your specific vocation within the local context. The paper should be 7-10 pages in length and will serve as the final exam.

## **V. Required Texts:**

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: Guilford Press, 2011.

Fry, Timothy, ed. *The Rule of St. Benedict*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Lischer, Richard. *Open Secrets*. New York: Broadway Books, 2002.

Nouwen, Henri. *Creative Ministry: Beyond Professionalism in Teaching, Preaching, Counseling, Organizing and Celebrating*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.

Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing A Conversational Relationship With God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012

## VI. Proposed Class Schedule

- 8/26 **Theology and Ministry:** Introductions, What Is God Doing in the World?
- 9/2 **Labor Day: No Class Meeting**
- 9/9 **Family Systems Part 1:**  
Reading: Friedman Introduction-Chapter 2  
Lischer Chapters 1-3: Reflection Paper Due
- 9/16 **Family Systems Part 2:**  
Reading: Friedman Chapters 3-7  
Lischer Chapters 4-6: Reflection Paper Due
- 9/23 **Family Systems Part 3:**  
Reading: Friedman Chapters 8-12  
Lischer: Chapters 7-9: Reflection Paper Due
- 9/30 **First Things Lecture at University Avenue Church of Christ**  
One Page Reflection Paper For Extra Credit (25 points)
- 10/7 **Ministry and Spiritual Formation Part 1:**  
Reading: Nouwen Introduction and Chapter 1: Reflection Paper Due  
Lischer: Chapters 10-12
- 10/14 **Ministry and Spiritual Formation Part 2:**  
Reading: Nouwen Chapters 2-3: Reflection Paper Due  
Lischer: Chapters 13-16
- 10/21 **Ministry and the Community:**  
Reading: Nouwen Chapters 4-5: Reflection Paper Due  
Fry: Read Through the Rule of Benedict
- 10/28 **Ministry and Discernment:**  
**Book Reviews Due:** Discussion of *Hearing God*  
Reading: Lischer: Chapters 17-19: Reflection Paper Due
- 11/4 **Ministry and Preaching:**  
Discussion of Fred Craddock, Thomas Long and Paul Wilson  
Reading: Lischer 20-22: Reflection Paper Due
- 11/11 **Pastoral Ministry In Times of Crisis Part 1:**  
Rule of Life Paper Due  
Case Study Presentations
- 11/18 **Pastoral Ministry In Times of Crisis Part 2:**  
Reflection Paper: Presentation of Pastoral Prayer  
Funerals, Weddings and Special Occasions
- 11/26 **Ministry and Missional Leadership Part 1:**  
Funeral Outlines Due

12/3 **Ministry and Missional Leadership Part 2:**

12/10 **Philosophy/Theology of Ministry Papers Due @ 10:00 PM**

## **VII. Bibliography**

- Ammerman, Nancy T., Jackson Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Barton, Ruth Haley. *Life Together in Christ: Experiencing Transformation in Community*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2014.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Pursuing God's Will Together: A Discernment Practice For Leadership Groups*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2018.
- Blanchard, Ken. *Leading at A Higher Level*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Branson, Mark Lau and Juan F. Martínez. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.
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- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. NY: MacMillan, 1959.
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- Callahan, Kennon L. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strong, Healthy Congregations Living in the Grace of God*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2005.
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- Foster, Richard, and James Bryan Smith (Eds.). *Devotional Classics*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993.
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- Hiebert, Paul G. *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.
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- Killen, Patricia O'Connell, and John DeBeer. *The Art of Theological Reflection*. NY: Crossroad, 1995.
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- Osmer, Richard R. *Practical Theology An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools For Prayer*. New York: Harper One, 1989.
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