

## Readiness for Ministry (MC850)

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary - Jacksonville  
Spring 2019 (Jan 18-19, Mar 1-2, and Mar 29-30)  
Classes meet Fridays (6:30-9:30pm) and Saturdays (8:30am to 4:30pm)  
Instructor: Justin S. Holcomb  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on bridging the world of the seminary with the world of the local congregation. The course will provide an opportunity for critical reflection for the vocational preparation of the student. An interdisciplinary approach on the nature of the ministerial identity, calling, life, and practice will flow together in the course. Issues related to personal formation, ministerial ethics, and congregational leadership will also be examined.

Multiple perspectives from biblical, theological, historical, pastoral studies and the social sciences will be introduced through the readings, and case studies. Student reports, research, and discussions will also provide significant input into the seminar context. As outcomes for the course, students will develop for themselves a cogent philosophy of ministry, a vision for leadership, and a comprehensive model of pastoral care and practice presented in the Readiness for Ministry presentation.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and exegete key biblical passages regarding pastoral ministry and relate the findings to a personal statement of pastoral ministry.
2. Describe various historical and theological models of the pastorate and show how they relate to contemporary ministry.
3. Articulate key elements of ecclesiology as a context for understanding pastoral ministry.
4. Discuss issues pertaining to ministerial authority and ethics and the congregation.
5. Reflect on a host of pastoral practices and how your theology will be expressed in those.
6. Examine various models of leadership and how they relate to one's personal ministry vision.
7. Determine how personal characteristics and traits influence personal ministry style.
8. Compose a philosophy of pastoral ministry.

### READING

#### Books

Beeley, Christopher, *Leading God's People: Wisdom from the Early Church for Today* (128 pages)

Willimon, William H., *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002)

Scazzero, Peter, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply*

*Transform Your Church, Team, and The World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015). [SEP]

Wilson, Jared C., *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Crossway, 2015)

Articles or Chapters (electronically provided on Sakai)

Chuck DeGroat, “Growing into Leadership Maturity: Self-Care and the Art of Shadow Boxing”

DeGroat, Chuck, “Shame and Grace in a Pastor’s Life”

“Sustaining Pastoral Excellence”

Alice Mann, “Changing Size” (chapter 1) from *Raising the Roof*

Timothy Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics”

Eugene Peterson, “The Subversive Pastor”

Tim Keller, “The Centrality of the Gospel”

Tim Keller, “Deconstructing Defeater Beliefs: Leading the Secular to Christ”

David W. Miller, “Analyzing and Understanding the Faith at Work Movement”

Kim Scott, *Radical Candor* (chapters 2 and 3)

Elbert Hubbard, “A Message to Garcia”

Randy Pope, “Flawed Marksmanship” in *InSourcing*

Mark Galli, “Spirituality for All the Wrong Reasons: An Interview with Eugene Peterson”

Kristen Deede Johnson, “Are We Missing the Point of Spiritual Disciplines?”

Justin Holcomb, “Theology and Philosophy of Leadership Development”

Video

Watch Simon Senick, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action”

[https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_sinek\\_how\\_great\\_leaders\\_inspire\\_action](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action)

Pick one book from this list

Hansen, David. *The Art of Pastoring: Ministry Without All the Answers*. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994, revised 2012)

Eswine, Zack. *The Imperfect Pastor: Discovering Joy in Our Limitations Through a Daily Apprenticeship with Jesus*. (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2016)

Osterhaus, James P, Joseph Jurkowski, and Todd Hahn. *Thriving Through Ministry Conflict*. (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2005)

Steinke, Peter L. *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach*. (Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006)

Swetland, Kenneth, L. *The Hidden World of the Pastor: Case Studies on Personal Issues of Real Pastors*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995 – Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock).

Kim, Matthew D. *7 Lessons for New Pastors: Your First Year in Ministry* (St. Louis, Chalice, 2011)

Guinness, Os. *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003. [SEP]

Wilson, Michael T. and Hoffmann, Brad, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, (IVP, 2007).

Peterson, Eugene, *Working the Angels: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*. (Eerdsman, 1987). [SEP]

## COURSE OUTLINE

To help you schedule your readings, here is the projected flow of the course. The specific reading list below are from the “Articles and Chapters” above and will be covered or discussed according to the outline. The other readings are required for the entire course in general and are expected to be included in your papers, course discussions, and presentations.

### 1. Call to Ministry

### 2. Congregational Development

- Alice Mann, “Changing Size” (chapter 1) from *Raising the Roof*
- Timothy Keller, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics”

### 3. Leadership

- Watch Simon Senick, “How Great Leaders Inspire Action”  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_sinek\\_how\\_great\\_leaders\\_inspire\\_action](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action)
- Randy Pope, “Flawed Marksmanship” in *InSourcing*
- Kim Scott, *Radical Candor* (chapters 2 and 3)
- Justin Holcomb, “Theological and Philosophical Foundations for Leadership”

#### 4. Life-Check and Planning

#### 5. The Creative Love of God: Ministry and the Invitation to Love

#### 6. Mission of God

- Eugene Peterson, “The Subversive Pastor”
- Tim Keller, “The Centrality of the Gospel”
- Tim Keller, “Deconstructing Defeater Beliefs: Leading the Secular to Christ”

#### 7. Whole Life Discipleship

- David W. Miller, “Analyzing and Understanding the Faith at Work Movement”

#### 8. Personal and Spiritual Lives

- Chuck DeGroat, “Growing into Leadership Maturity: Self-Care and the Art of Shadow Boxing”
- DeGroat, Chuck, “Shame and Grace in a Pastor’s Life”
- Mark Galli, “Spirituality for All the Wrong Reasons: An Interview with Eugene Peterson”
- Kristen Deede Johnson, “Are We Missing the Point of Spiritual Disciplines?”

### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

#### **1. Philosophy of Ministry Paper** (Due May 3, 2019. Submit printed version.)

The student will complete a thorough description of his or her current philosophy of ministry. The paper should be 2,000 words in length. The statement should present the core values and beliefs that shape current ministerial practice. It should clearly express what you do in ministry and why you do it. The paper should include a discussion of the following:

- Definition of pastoral ministry
- Exposition of current ecclesiology, including the cultural context for ministry
- Core values and beliefs undergirding ministerial practice
- Ethical guidelines and expectations for ministry in areas of same-sex marriage, divorce-remarriage, personal ministry ethics, use of money, etc.
- Views of church governance and polity
- Key biblical passages shaping one’s view of ministry, including the role of women in ministry.
- Biblical models impacting your understanding of pastoral authority and leadership
- Impact of personality, style and preferences<sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- The nature of your calling and the way it has changed over time.

#### **2. Leadership Reflection Paper** (Due April 26, 2019. Submit printed version.)

Write a 2,000-word page paper on leadership. How do you see your leadership in your future in pastoral ministry? What gifts do you have in leadership? What is your style of leadership? How will you deal with conflict? And how will you lead in a changing church context? What are positive examples you have seen or experienced and hope to emulate? What are negative examples you have

seen or experienced that you hope to avoid?

### **3. Readiness for Ministry Paper** (Due May 3, 2019. Submit printed version.)

Formal theological education should present a “season” or opportunity for students to pursue development as a whole person-in-ministry. In addition to academic preparation, students should intentionally address spiritual and character formation issues, vocational development, and connection with a faith community over their course in seminary. In a sense, students need to see themselves as responsibly working with God and the faith community to “author” this new chapter in their lives by integrating seminary education into a “meta-curriculum” of holistic preparation for leadership in God’s Kingdom. This exercise provides you the opportunity to reflect on your current ministry readiness from a variety of perspectives. Please use the following prompts to complete a 2,000 word assessment of your current condition in the various development areas indicated below:

1. Spiritual formation
2. Relational health
3. Integrity of character<sup>[SEP]</sup>
4. Personal Health<sup>[SEP]</sup>
5. Emotional Health<sup>[SEP]</sup>
6. Vocational Experience and Competency
7. Ecclesial connections

#### Provocative Prompts

The following thoughts and questions are meant to be suggestive of possible ways to assess and your life in various areas and aid you in your development plan. Please do not think you are obligated to respond to all of these or that you are limited to these prompts.

#### Spiritual Formation

What is the nature and quality of your relationship to God? How consistent and vital are your times of intimacy with the Lord? What seems to be lacking and why? How varied and comprehensive are your approaches of spiritual formation? What models of spiritual development and formation guide your devotional practices? How can accountability relationships or spiritual friendships foster your involvement in personal and corporate spiritual disciplines? What are you doing to enhance the spiritual growth of others? What can you do to insure that seminary life does not erode your walk with God? Who do you pray with on a regular basis? Whom should you be praying with? How does your faith help you to trust God in difficult situations, to do things out of your comfort zone?

#### Relational Health

Do you have close friends? Are you satisfied with the quality of your relationships? Do you have anyone that you can confide with about your deepest concerns and struggles? Why not? Are you involved in Christian community (small group fellowship) and to what degree? What is the quality of your relationship to your family and wife (if married)? What can you do to enhance intimacy in your relationship with your spouse or children? Do you have healthy boundaries in your relationships? Do you have problematic relationships? What can you do to

reconcile these? Do you have Christian colleagues with whom you can be vulnerable? What will you do to establish and maintain current relationships?

### Integrity of Character

In what areas of your life do you feel a lack of integrity or personal honesty? Do you have a history of problems with a life controlling behavior such as addiction to sex, substances, money, etc.? What behaviors or attitudes cause you to feel shame? Do you owe money to people? Do you cheat on your finances and taxes? Do you struggle with issues of sexuality or gender preference that might compromise your vocation? Are you who you publicly present yourself to be? What behaviors or attitudes do you feel you have that are not consistent with your sense of calling and vocation? What can you do to change? What kind of support or assistance will you need to improve?

### Personal Health

What concerns or issues has testing revealed about your personality and temperament?<sup>[1]</sup> Do you have problems with anxiety, depression, impulsivity, or anger? Do you see a counselor or therapist? Are you on medication? Do you feel well most of the time? What problems do you have with your energy levels? Do you sleep well? Do you sleep too much? Not enough? Are you significantly overweight? Do you get enough exercise? Do you have any health problems that may interfere with your ability to do ministry? Do you have a health condition that could be remedied by medical intervention but have not done anything about it? If you could have an elective medical or dental procedure, what would it be? What do you do recreationally? Do you take enough days off? Why not?

### Emotional Health

Do you find yourself with regular anxiety? Is there a history of depression? How easily are you frustrated when your plans are thwarted?

### Vocational Experiences and Competency

In what areas of ministry do you lack experience? What are you going to do to gain more ministry experience? Do you have a ministry mentor? If so, is this relationship personally helpful and satisfying? If not, what can you do to improve it? What other developmental relationships can you foster to facilitate your growth in ministry? What are your current ministry avenues? What new types of ministry would you like to try? What do you do to refresh or improve your performance of ministry or leadership? What cross-cultural ministry opportunities have you had? What types of cross-cultural ministry would you like to do? What keeps you from them?

### Ecclesial Connections

What is your current faith community? Are you satisfied with this relationship? If not, why not? Are you thinking about changing denominational affiliation? Why? What are you doing to solidify your professional status with your faith group (license, ordination)? Do you have a mentor or relationship with someone who can develop denominational connections for you? Where will you be serving God in five years? Ten years? How satisfied is your faith group with you and your current ministry? What doctrinal concerns or issues are you currently struggling with? How would these influence your identification with your current faith tradition?

#### **4. Personal Rule of Life** (Due May 3, 2019. Submit printed version.)

Prepare a personalized rule of life (3-4 pages total). The rule should address the following issues (500-1,000 words):

- Devotional life
- Holy Communion
- Personal prayer
- Confession
- Spiritual direction
- Fasting
- Bible reading
- Study
- Generosity
- Retreats
- Service
- Recreation
- Rest
- Hospitality

Prepare a brief rationale (500-1,000 words) that explains the decisions you made in constructing your rule of life.

#### **5. Presentation** (March 29 and 30, 2019)

This 30-minute presentation during our third weekend will provide students with an opportunity to present a synthesis of personal and vocational development through their seminary experience. 15-minutes will be allotted for questions and deeper dialogue on each presentation. Discussion in class will guide how this presentation will be done. The student will make a presentation during the third weekend of the class. People interested in your development as a pastor are invited to attend. This presentation should be a capstone summary of your development through seminary.

#### **GRADING SCALE**

Listed below are the assignments that will determine your final course grade.

Philosophy of Ministry	20%
Leadership Reflection Paper	20%
Readiness for Ministry	20%
Rule of Life	20%
Presentation	20%

A (97-100), A- (94-96), B+ (91-93), B (88-90), B- (86-87), C+ (83-85), C (80-82), C- (78-79), D+ (75-

77), D (72-74), D- (70-71), F (below 70)

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Class attendance and participation are a central part of this course. If you should miss a class, you are expected to contact another student regarding the information covered.

Late papers will be graded down 33% for each 24 hours late.

All written assignments should be submitted in either Word or PDF format. Assignments should be double spaced with 1" margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type. Assignments must be submitted electronically.

Plagiarism is considered a serious breach of personal and academic integrity. It involves the use of another person's distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one's own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one's writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures.