

Syllabus for DM 6462
Doctor of Ministry Seminar II: The Minister as Biblical Interpreter
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
June 1-5, 2009

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2009 Topic: Paul and Politics

Description

Seminar II challenges D.Min. students to increase their ability to bring interpretation of the Bible creatively to bear on their own pastoral identities and contexts as these have been further clarified and articulated in Seminar I. The focus of Seminar II in 2009 will be on letters of Paul, interpreted particularly in relation to the political context of the Roman empire and in terms of their relevance to political realities in our contemporary globalized world. As a result of their participation in this seminar, students should be able to

- identify and articulate the significance of Paul's letters to churches under his care for understanding and responding to political dimensions of ministry;
- interact critically with other interpreters of Paul's political significance;
- identify and analyze political dimensions of a contemporary ministry situation or practice of ministry;
- drawing on Paul as a model, develop and articulate a redemptive response or approach to that situation or practice; and
- defend interpretive choices in the use of both Paul and his interpreters.

Assignments

1. Read the letters of Paul and the secondary works listed below with a critical eye (and, preferably, in the order in which they are listed). The secondary works model ways of reading Paul that emphasize the relevance of his thought and practice for "politics" in the broadest sense of the term. You should be prepared to discuss all of the readings during the seminar. You and two or three other participants will be asked to lead a discussion of one of the secondary works. The goal of your leadership will be to help others engage what you and they have learned from the reading about understanding and addressing political dimensions of the practice of ministry.

Letters of Paul

I Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, I-II Corinthians, and Romans

Secondary Works

Horsley, Richard A., ed. *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order*. New York: Trinity Press International, 2004. A collection of essays interpreting Paul in relation to Roman imperial ideology.

Ehrensperger, Kathy. *That We May Be Mutually Encouraged: Feminism and the New Perspective in Pauline Studies*. New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004. A feminist approach to the study of Paul.

Braxton, Brad R. *No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002. A reading of Galatians informed by African American liberation theology.

Badiou, Alain. *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*. Translated by Ray Brassier. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. A short—but challenging—book by a leading French philosopher who sees in Paul a model for affirming and yet transcending difference.

NOTE: If it has been a while since you studied Bible in seminary, it might be helpful first to read the articles on “Biblical Criticism,” “Exegesis,” and “Paul” in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. by D. N. Freedman and others (New York: Doubleday, 1992). The ambitious might also read one of the recent manuals on biblical interpretation, such as *Scripture: An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation*, ed. Michael J. Gorman (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005) or *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner’s Handbook*, 3rd edition, by John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2007). Presbyterian students, in particular, may be interested in the papers, “Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture” and “Biblical Authority and Interpretation,” available at <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/scripture-use.pdf> (note especially the guidelines on pages 6-16).

2. Drawing on the assigned readings (and supplemental bibliography) and using Paul as a model, (a) choose a particular ministry situation or practice of ministry, (b) analyze its political dimensions, (c) develop a redemptive response or approach to it, and (d) write this up as a short paper (10-12 pages). Your paper should include direct engagement with relevant texts of Paul and critical interaction with the views of other interpreters. You should clear your topic with the instructors **no later than April 24** and submit your completed paper to the instructors and other seminar participants by posting it on the course Blackboard site **no later than May 25**. Your paper will be discussed in a small group, including one of the instructors, during the seminar. The hope is that your work in Seminar II (and particularly on this paper) will move you closer to an idea for your final project in ministry, a preliminary prospectus for which is prepared in Seminar III.

Assessment

The five principal learning goals identified above in the description of the seminar are intended to guide all of our work. What you accomplish in your seminar paper and what you contribute during the seminar to discussion of the assigned readings and the papers of other participants will provide evidence by which you and the instructors can assess to what extent you have achieved those goals. You will likely learn more than this during the course of your preparation and participation in the seminar, but these goals identify the core of what the instructors hope all participants will learn.

Calendar

Friday, April 24	Deadline for clearing your paper topic with the instructors	
Monday, May 25	Deadline for posting your seminar paper on Blackboard	
Monday, June 1	<u>Session 1</u>	
	Morning (9:00-11:30)	Plenary: "Paul and Politics"
	Afternoon (12:15-2:15)	Plenary: Discussion of Horsley
	(2:30-4:30)	Breakout: Student papers (2)
Tuesday, June 2	<u>Session 2</u>	
	Morning (9:00-11:30)	Plenary: Discussion of Ehrensperger
	Afternoon (12:15-4:30)	Breakout: Student papers (4)
Wednesday, June 3	<u>Session 3</u>	
	Morning (9:00-11:30)	Plenary: Discussion of Braxton
	Afternoon (12:15-4:30)	Breakout: Student papers (4)
Thursday, June 4	<u>Session 4</u>	
	Morning (9:00-11:30)	Plenary: Discussion of Badiou
	Afternoon (12:15-4:30)	Breakout: Student papers (4)
	Evening (7:00-9:00)	Breakout: Student paper (1)
Friday, June 5	<u>Session 5</u>	
	Morning (9:00-11:30)	Plenary: "What have we learned?"
	(11:30-12:00)	Plenary: Concluding worship

Seminary Policy on Academic Honesty: All work you submit is expected to be yours. Any quotation of the words of others must be clearly indicated, and all direct indebtedness must be acknowledged by citation of author and source. To fail to do so is to be guilty of plagiarism.

Seminary Policy on Inclusive Language: In speech and writing, avoid language that reinforces gender, racial, or ethnic stereotypes; that is pejorative; or that excludes part of the population. For example, avoid using male pronouns or such terms as "man" or "men" to refer to a group that includes females.

The **Academic Support Center** can provide additional guidance on these policies if it is needed.